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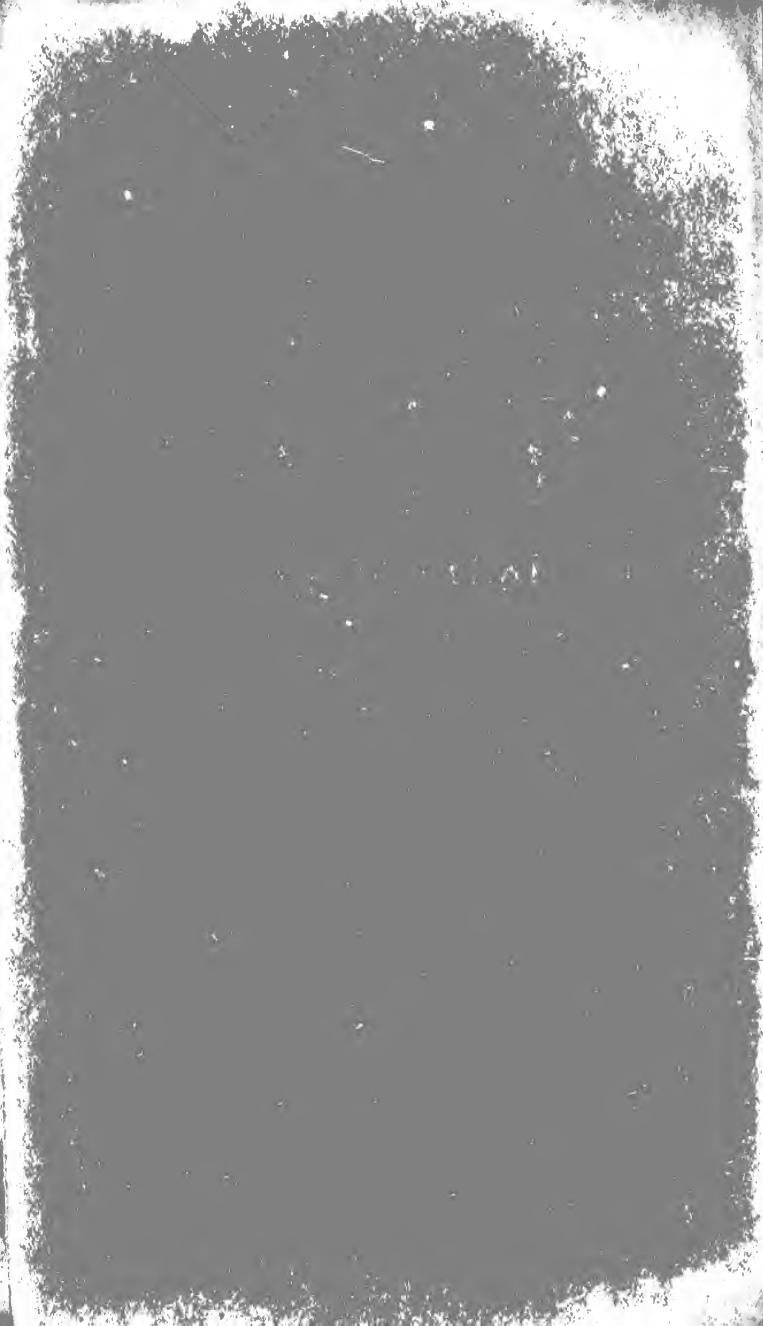
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REGINALD DALTON.

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REGINALD DALTON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
VALERIUS, AND ADAM BLAIR.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH;
AND T. CADELL, LONDON.

M.DCCC.XXIII.

EDINBURGH:
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English

REGINALD DALTON.

BOOK VI. CHAP. I.

AT an early hour of the first day that our unfortunate spent in his prison, a portmanteau, containing clothes, and the like, was sent to him from his College, and along with this, a letter addressed to him in the handwriting of his father. Reginald, perhaps the very bitterest portion of whose reflections turned upon the Vicar, could not bring himself to open it. "What right have I," he said to himself, "to receive language which *now* he could not address to me? It was not to *me* this letter was written. The touch of this bloody hand shall not pollute it."—He was restrained by some secret feeling from destroying it, but he buried it at the bottom of his portman-

VOL. III.

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teau ; and if at times, in turning over his linen, his eye chanced to rest upon it, it never did so without shrinking.

He little suspected what this letter actually contained ; had he done so, his behaviour might perhaps have been different. But, at all events, if there was nothing there that could have tended to administer comfort to his bosom, neither, in the present situation of his thoughts, was there, or perhaps could there have been, anything capable of much aggravating their gloom.

In a word, the Vicar's letter contained an account of the death of Miss Dalton of Gryphewast. The lady had been rapidly declining in her health ever since the period of her accession to the estate of her family, and she had at last sunk under an attack of nervous fever. The Vicar mentioned in his letter, that he was just preparing to set off for Lannwell, in order to be present at his relation's funeral.

It may be easily believed that this was one of the most cheerless journeys that good man ever had the fortune to undertake. From everything that he had heard of the course of Miss Dalton's

life since her father's decease, he could have no sort of doubt that she must, long ere now, have executed a will in favour of her brother. If he could have nourished a single dream of the possibility of this being otherwise, that must have been effectually extinguished by the manner in which Sir Charles Catline himself announced to him the event which had now taken place, and requested his presence at Grypherwast on the day appointed for the funeral. But, painful as the circumstances were, Mr Dalton never dreamed of not complying with that cold and formal request. He knew and felt what was due to his family—to the memory of a long line of ancestors—and to the kindness of his late benevolent kinsman, whose only child was about to partake his recent grave. This child, too—he had once loved Barbara Dalton. She had loved him too, and loved him long. She had drooped and pined because her love was unhappy. It was he, it was his juvenile love, and his juvenile rashness, that had cast a shade, never to be dispelled, over the whole after-surface of her earthly existence. What wonder that in his breast there was scanty room *now*, when he thought of

her, for any emotions but those of gentlest compassion and regret, mingled, it may be, with some few lingering stirrings of self-reproach. If there were haughtier and harsher feelings that blended themselves with the reflections even of this humbly-minded, and pure, and single-hearted man, it was not towards the memory of Barbara Dalton that these flung their blacker shadows. Whatever these might be, they pointed not to the dead, but to the living—not to the feeble spirit that had been worked upon, but to the craft which had worked. In truth, however, such thoughts as these, even thus directed, were but uncongenial guests in a bosom such as his—a bosom wherein

“Revenge and all ferocious thoughts were dead,—”

where, unless in a few less-guarded moments, it was indeed a hard thing for vice itself to stimulate any severer feeling than that of pity—where anger scarcely flamed ere it was extinguished in sorrow—where even contempt chastened itself into compassion. But besides all this, Mr Dalton still owed a duty to the living. Mrs Elizabeth was still at Grypherwast, and he foresaw distinctly that

henceforth it must be his part to watch over her grey hairs. It was extremely possible that Miss Dalton might have modified her bequest, so as to meet the chance of her aunt surviving her. The reverse, however, was also possible ; and, at all events, there could be no doubt it was his business to be at Grypherwast.

He had no wish, however, to intrude himself upon the hospitality of a house which had already, in all probability, passed from the Daltons, so he took care to arrange it so that he should arrive at Grypherwast just in time to be present at the funeral.

As he was riding thither by himself from the coast, he overtook a party of gentlemen who were going in the same direction, upon the same errand. His person was well known to them all, and he had some little acquaintance with one of them. This person introduced him to the others, and they continued to ride in company, although for some time there was very little of conversation.

Mr Dalton, who had heard them all talking to-

gether very earnestly but a few moments before, could not but attribute this sudden pause to his own appearance ; and, after a little time, he drew the gentleman with whom he had been previously acquainted, to one side of the road, and hinted to him, in a whisper, that he understood and regretted the nature and cause of this interruption, adding, that it was entirely unnecessary, as it must be well known to him, and to every body, that he had long ago made up his mind as to what Miss Dalton's will was likely to be.

“ My good friend,” Squire Dawkins whispered in reply, “ you are so far quite right in your guess, do ye see ; but if the truth must come out, why, we were just laying our heads together about some little matters ; and, let me tell ye in your ear, things have peeped out within these two or three days, that have excited a good deal of surprise here, and perhaps you are more interested in them than you are aware ; but, to be sure, 'tis always the safe plan to expect the worst.”

“ Indeed—indeed, sir,” said the Vicar, “ I fear you *will* not understand me. I assure you, once

for all, that *I* have no more expectation of being my cousin's heir than yourself."

"Thereafter as it may be," quoth Mr Dawkins; "but let me tell you, Mr Dalton, that there's ne'er a gentleman of this country that will not be very heartily pleased, if you find yourself mistaken. But, not to go about the bush, Mr Dalton, Sir Charles Catline has been in very ill temper this week past, and more especially ever since the poor lady was given over by the doctors, he has been not like the same man. 'Tis even so, I assure ye, sir. Why, I met him myself but yesterday, close to his own house at Pyesworth, and, by Jupiter, his face was as black then as his hat-band is just now."

"Sir Charles, no doubt, loved his sister. Why should we be surprised at that?"

"Aha!" whispered Dawkins, even in a lower note than before—"Aha! my good friend, that glove won't fit. Nay, nay, Mr Dalton, 'tis perhaps cruel in me to say so much as I have done; but the fact of the matter is, that it is universally suspected here among the neighbours, that there is something in the will by no means to Sir Charles's mind."

“ Then ’tis certain that there *is* a will ?”

“ Ay, ay—no question of that ; but, between ourselves, it was not Sir Charles Catline’s attorney that wrote it, and that’s just one of the things that people hereabouts have taken notice of. But what signifies talking, Mr Dalton ? If things be as they ought to be, depend on’t ’twill be a great pleasure to us all. Catline’s a very good fellow, and a very obliging neighbour, that I shall say for him ; but my own forefathers have been here these two or three hundred years bygone, and hang it, it may be all folly to say so, but when I hear of an old family quitting the country, why, I can’t help thinking ’tis the loss of an old friend.”

Squire Dawkins was talking away in this style with the Vicar, when they were interrupted by the arrival of another company of gentlemen, likewise in black, some of whom remarked, that they were perhaps rather late, and that it might be well to get on more rapidly. This motion, which was extremely agreeable to Mr Dalton, was followed by all present ; and they advanced to Grypherwast at a trot too brisk to permit much conversation of any kind, and quite incompatible

with anything like the whispers of a confidential communication.

The Vicar and his companions, on reaching the Hall, were ushered at once into the great drawing-room, which was crowded with very nearly the same assemblage that had been called together some eight months before, by the obsequies of Miss Dalton's father. They had scarcely entered the apartment ere a sort of murmur seemed to pass round the different groupings by which its floor was occupied. The Vicar had no time given him for guessing as to the meaning of this buzz, which, however, he could not doubt was connected with his own appearance. He had not stood there a couple of minutes ere an old grey-headed Baronet, who had been a very intimate friend of the late Squire Dalton, came up and whispered in his ear, shaking him at the same time most potently by the hand, and closing his left eye in a very significant fashion—"Wish ye joy, cousin, wish ye joy, from my heart." Having done this, the knight turned on his heel, and resumed with great composure the aspect and attitude of that decorum which became a man of his consequence

in a room filled with a company so motley in its materials. He was succeeded, after the pause of a second or two, by a bluff bald-headed gentleman-farmer, who thrust both his hands deep into his capacious waistcoat pockets, made as reverent a bow to the Vicar as the stiffness of his back would permit, muttered between his teeth—"Right, after all, by G—," and retreated. And then again, almost before this rustic salutation had been recovered from, there drew near no less a personage than the Very Reverend the Archdeacon of —, the rosiest and the sleekest of all the wearers of the black apron. This dignitary shook Mr Dalton's hand as never was hand of poor Vicar shaken by that of wealthy Archdeacon before or since, and dropped these words slowly and softly from his oily lips,—“Be composed, brother; I pray God you may be enabled to sustain this without being over much puffed up. It is on such occasions that one should be most anxious to display the equanimity which springeth from contempt of the world. O! Mr Dalton, we must remember that, after all, our treasure is laid up elsewhere.”

But the Vicar had scarcely recovered from the effects of the Archdeacon's condescension, ere a thrust equally home, though in quite a different sort, proceeded from a poor old Curate, whose coat was as bare of nap as a frog's is of feathers,—“ I hope you won't think me intrusive,” whispered he, in the most humble way imaginable ; “ but we're old acquaintance, Mr Dalton, and when you're leaving Lannwell, perhaps you'll remember my boy James—Poor fellow, he was third wrangler, and yet he has never been able to get a title yet.”

These various salutations came so thick upon each other's heels, that our worthy friend could scarcely stare in reply to the one of them, ere a blush was called into his cheek by the other. The last was the most perplexing of all ; but the Curate had not half finished his recapitulation of his son's merits and misfortunes, when the whole company was suddenly silent—dead silent. Mr Dalton looked round, and perceived at once the cause of this—Sir Charles Catline had entered the room, and taken his place at the upper end of it, arrayed in the full costume of the chief mourn-

er. When his eye met Mr Dalton's, he bowed to him very low, but without leaving his station. The Vicar returned the obeisance with similar formality, and for a few moments there was a perfect pause on all sides—a pause during which one might have heard a pin fall. Mr Dalton, a good deal perplexed, it is not to be denied, in consequence of what had been said to him from so many different quarters, could not help keeping his eyes fixed upon Sir Charles all this while. His gaze was involuntary—but it was stedfast—and the Baronet once and again met and shrunk from it. The good Vicar was no very skilful peruser of human faces, yet he saw enough to convince him, that some secret agitation lurked beneath the coldness and calmness of that surface; and perhaps a far more practised speculator than he might have puzzled himself in vain to go deeper. Was it the lingering shame of successful, or the ill-suppressed spleen of baffled artifice?—Or could, from some unknown cause, these two feelings, near enough a-kin at times in their expression, be blended here together in one bosom?—

The door was thrown open, and Sir Charles,

stepping instantly forward, said, " Mr Dalton, will you be pleased to walk here ?" The Vicar saw that every body was making respectful place for him, and he obeyed, in a mixture of emotions which we shall not attempt describing.

Sir Charles and he walked side by side behind Barbara Dalton's bier. As they went along, they found ranged, by the way they had to pass, all the children of the school of which she had been half patroness, half teacher. The poor little children were drest uniformly in deep mourning, and the simple expression of grief, curiosity, and natural awe that sat upon their innocent faces, might have rebuked the stirring passions of the merest worldly bosom that was there. The tears on those young cheeks recalled all the Vicar's wandering thoughts, and fixed them on the bier that he was following. These were the children of one that had, for his sake, cut herself off from the world, and the world's pleasures, and the world's ties. They were the symbols of that tenderness which, the natural outlet dammed up by a rash, perchance a rude hand, must needs find another channel to flow in. But for him, she might have been a

wife, a mother—perhaps a living and a happy one. No wonder that a solemn tear stole down *his* cheek, while “dust to dust” was echoed from the stately sepulchre of his forefathers over the descending coffin of the first love of his youth. No wonder that, at that moment, he was capable of despising all the possessions, all the hopes that the grave bounds. No wonder that he turned him from the closed tomb with a heart too full of sadness to hold one drop of bitter.

The service was scarcely finished, ere Sir Charles Catline disengaged himself from the company, and proceeded, attended by only two persons, of whom his attorney was one, to the house. Two or three voices immediately whispered, “Mr Dalton—Mr Dalton, don’t you see they’ve gone to read the will, Mr Dalton?” But the Vicar had received no invitation, and he hesitated for a moment, until some one reminded him, that, if it were but as the heir at law, it was his business to be present. He followed Sir Charles’s party, and overtook them near the end of the wood. On observing his approach, the Baronet whispered to his attorney, who hung back, and joined the Vicar.

The instant Sir Charles and the other gentleman were beyond the wood, our attorney stopped abruptly within the shade, and said to the Vicar, “ Mr Dalton, I presume you wish to hear the will read—but, as a friend, I may just mention, that the fact is, you are nowise interested in it. It was not I that drew the deed, sir ; but I have just been informed by the gentleman who was employed, that your name does not occur——”

“ The estate goes at once to Sir Charles Catline ?”

“ Yes, at once to that family, Mr Dalton.”

“ Ah ! then I have the more reason to be present—I must see what provision is made for Mrs Elizabeth.”

“ Ah ! very properly thought—very prettily thought indeed, sir—but the fact is, Mr Dalton, ’tis impossible to account for these things—the fact, however, is, that our late friend had not, I believe, contemplated the chance of predeceasing Mrs Dalton, at the time when the draught was prepared. I am really concerned that it should have been so ; but, as I remarked before, was not consulted on the occasion—odd enough that

too—had long been in habits of intimacy—but however—’Tis a world of disappointment this, Mr Dalton—we all find that, Mr Dalton—’tis at least comfortable to reflect, that the old lady had no want of any thing—though, to be sure, if she had, considering what hands——”

“ I dare say she will go with me to Lannwell,” said the Vicar—the thought was perhaps not meant to be uttered—but, however that might have been, the words were spoken.

“ To Lannwell?—but I hope I am not intrusive, Mr Dalton. It had been supposed by your friends here, that you were on your way to Oxford—I beg pardon, but——”

“ My way to Oxford?”

“ Ay, yes—I beg pardon again, sir—but I really was quite unprepared for this—perhaps you have missed your letters, sir.”

“ Missed my letters?—On my way to Oxford?—What is all this mystery?—What is it?” said the Vicar, raising his voice—“ I pray you speak out, sir.”

“ Ah, sir! indeed, indeed, I am most heartily sorry to be——”

“ Oxford ! My boy ! Speak the word at once, sir—my poor boy——”

“ I—I crave your pardon, sir—I—I beg you’ll forgive me, sir—I—I—I assure you, sir, that, according to the newspaper account, sir, there is still——”

“ Newspaper ! where is it, sir ?—what is it, sir ?—Oh God !”

“ Mr Dalton—my dear Mr Dalton, your agitation alarms me. I have the paper in my pocket, sir—here it is, sir—’tis only a duel, sir—a duel about a girl, sir—Young men will be young men, sir—here’s the paper, sir—your son’s not much hurt, sir—’tis at the top of the third page, I think, sir—young men—ay, here it is, ‘ Unfortunate fracas’—no, that’s not it—‘ Love and honour’—ay, ay, that’s it—‘ Oxford, the thirteenth’—that’s the date, Mr Dalton—there’s the paper for you, my dear sir.”

The Vicar read, the attorney the while looking over his shoulder, the following paragraph from a morning paper of March the 14th.

“ LOVE AND HONOUR—DISTRESSING OCCURRENCE. *Oxford, 13th.*

“ A meeting took place yesterday evening between two gentlemen, both of this University—Mr Chisney of Christ-Church and Mr Dalton of * * * College. Melancholy to relate, both pistols took effect. Mr C. is considered to be in a very hopeless state ; his antagonist, who was less severely wounded, has already been committed to the Castle under a Vice-Chancellor’s warrant.

“ This occurrence has excited a great sensation among all circles here ; the more so, that the parties had long been in habits of the strictest intimacy.”

“ FURTHER PARTICULARS.

“ *Fuit ante Helenam.*”—HOR.

“ 10 A.M.

“ A fair Cyprian, it has transpired, furnished the occasion of the above fatal disagreement.

The seconds, Messrs S—— and H——, have absconded ; but, it is supposed, cannot long elude discovery.”

Mr Dalton read the paragraph twice over, folded up the newspaper, and thrust it into the attorney's hand, saying, “ I thank you, sir ; it is enough.”

“ My dear Mr Dalton,” said he, pocketing the paper, “ I am sure I feel for you—I am a father myself, sir—Oh, sir, young men little think—but I beg pardon, sir,—I would not be intrusive, sir.”

Mr Dalton was turning from him, but he proceeded with—“ I crave your pardon, Mr Dalton, but I must attend Sir Charles—business must be attended to, sir. Shall I carry your commands, sir ? or perhaps—but I think you said, you would come into the Hall yourself, sir.”

The Vicar eyed him from head to foot for a moment, and then said, with a sudden burst of incontrollable contempt, “ Begone, leave me, sir !” —he added, in a whisper of still more cutting scorn, “ business must be attended to.”

The attorney touched his hat and withdrew—quickenings his usual shuffle into something between a hop and a run the instant he had got beyond the firs. Mr Dalton, hearing the company advancing towards him from the burying-place, leapt aside, and concealed himself behind a thicket of evergreens, until the last footstep sounded distant. He then came back upon the path, and walked by himself to the Sepulchre of St Judith's.

There was no one lingering near the chapel—he seated himself upon the grass, at the root of the pine that was nearest it. Half-shading his eyes with his hand, he gazed towards the tombs. Who shall describe the agony of a despairing father's thoughts? His boy had erred, and had confessed his errors, and they had been forgiven. What would not such a father forgive! But here, what was the result of all that repentance—what was the repayment of all that dear forgiveness! A *Cyprian*! a quarrel about a *Cyprian*! a duel!—a fatal duel—a companion—a relation—a friend—Guilt, depraved and filthy guilt, upon so young a head!—Blood, kindred blood, upon so young a

hand !—Was this the gentle boy that had lain in his bosom ?—Was this he whose heart he used to read in his innocent eyes, and so lately too ?—Was this he who had partaken his every thought—for whom he had welcomed every care—for whom he had toiled, and wept, and prayed ?—Was this the dear pledge of his youthful love—the joy of his manhood—the only hope of his grey hairs ?—Alas ! had darkness, fatal, sinful darkness, gathered over all that fair promise ?—Was he alone in the world ?—Was his poverty to have no recompense ? Was there to be no staff for his age ?

The Vicar sat musing there for a long while—it was but an hour, but what an eternity may be summed in one such hour ! He arose and dipt his hands in the stream, and laved a few cool drops upon his brow. He then walked very quickly through the wood, and being perfectly acquainted with the grounds, found his way to the stables, without going near to the house, or mixing with any of the many groups that were still lingering in front of it upon the lawn.

There was only a single lad in the stable, and he made him instantly saddle his horse for him. He mounted, and rode into the village by a back way. Many persons addressed, and would have stopt him, but he returned a hasty salutation to each, and proceeded, without entering into the least conversation with any one. He could hear the whispers of—"Ah! Mr Dalton, he's away by himself—So Sir Charles has it after all."—He could hear this, and fifty more things of the same sort, accompanied with various gestures of curiosity, of surprise, and perhaps of regret and of compassion.—What cared he now for all these things? What was Grypherwast? What were wills, and heritages, and worldly successes, and worldly disappointments, and worldly curiosities, and worldly comments to him?

As soon as he had passed the village, he pushed his mare into her swiftest pace, and held on without once drawing his bridle, until he reached Lancaster. There, no public conveyance being expected for several hours, he threw himself into a post-chaise, and bid the boy drive towards Man-

chester. Ere he had got out of the town, however, he remembered that he was altogether unprovided with money for such a journey—and he must needs borrow from some acquaintance. He had some difficulty in accomplishing this ; but at last met one of the city clergymen, to whom he had no occasion to explain the circumstances of his case.—He reached Manchester about midnight, and in about an hour's time was seated in one of the Birmingham diligences.

CHAPTER II.

REGINALD, meanwhile, wanted not in the prison, towards which his heart-broken parent was hastening, whatever comfort could be afforded to him by the kindness and sympathy of his juvenile friends in the University. The very morning after his apprehension, his cell was visited in succession by almost all the gentlemen of his own college, with whom he had at any period lived on terms of the smallest intimacy. Their society, their purses, whatever these thoughtless young fellows could command, was offered with such heartiness and sincerity as if he had been the brother of each of them. If it be true, that when Reginald rose that morning, he was as well disposed as any one can be to think hardly of the world—it is no less true, ere the day was done, he had seen abundant reason to reproach himself for such thoughts.

Among other traits of real generosity, that which affected him the most sensibly was the behaviour of Mr Stukeley. This young gentleman, having reached in safety the house of a friend of his family near Reading, considered himself as, for the present, quite beyond the reach of the Proctor's inquiries. After resting himself for a few hours, he was about to proceed to London by crossways, and in a female disguise, when his friend, who had ridden into the town of Reading for the purpose of gathering intelligence, brought him word of Mr Dalton's having been taken immediately, and committed to the Castle of Oxford. Mr Stukeley, who had reckoned pretty securely on Reginald's agility, and scarcely doubted he was ere this time buried in London, no sooner heard the real situation of things, than he threw himself into a post-chaise, and drove straight back to Oxford. Without even visiting his chambers, he instantly went to the Castle, announced and surrendered himself, and had taken possession, ere Reginald had the least hint of his proceedings, of a cell immediately adjoining that occupied by his friend. After he had settled himself in his

new quarters, he asked and obtained admission to those of his neighbour ; and, in reply to all Reginald's reproofs of his rashness, contented himself with swearing that he knew Reginald would have done the same thing, had their situations been exchanged. In short, Stukeley made it his business to have Reginald's room arrayed forthwith in as comfortable a style as its character would permit ; and seemed to devote himself to the task of lightening and soothing his unfortunate young friend's reflections, with a zeal as entire and unremitting as if he had himself been altogether free from trouble and entanglement.

Much, however, as Reginald felt all the kindness which his misfortunes had thus called into action around him, it is not to be supposed that even this could have much effect in lessening the gloom which sat upon his mind, whenever he returned to the contemplation of the real state of his affairs. On the contrary, the better he was compelled to think of the world in which he had been living, the more sorely did he feel the conviction, that, whatever might be the issue of Chisney's illness, he was in truth and for ever done with that world,

and with all that belonged to it. That very day the official notification of his having ceased to be a member of the University, was handed to him in his prison. He had expected it ;—yet when it came, it was still a blow. He heard nothing from Mr Keith—hour after hour he sat watching, but never a word or a line from him. He could account for this only by supposing (which was indeed the case) that the Priest had been very seriously affected by the incidents and exposures of the preceding day. Yet what poor comfort was here !—Keith ill, dying—himself a prisoner, ruined, an outcast at the best !—Ellen Hesketh, alone under such circumstances, bereaved of every support,—what hope could there now be for him or for her ?—His father, too ! when he turned his thoughts to Lannwell, and pictured all that agony—and then perhaps reverted to Chisney, and thought of him cut off, very likely at least to be so, in the prime and pride of his days—when he weighed with himself in calmness all that had been, and all that might be, what wonder that our youth found even kindness a weariness, society a

pain, the world a wilderness, his own heart one wound !

It was in vain, therefore, that Stukeley and his other young friends exerted every art in their power to sooth and sustain Reginald's spirits. He was involved in a cloud of melancholy, to dispel which they had no charm. Even when they were in the room beside him, he strove without success to appear to listen to what they were saying. His eye wandered listlessly from the floor of his cell, to the window and the cloudy sky. His ear watched amidst all the buzz of conversation for the whistle of the wind among the ruinous crannies of the old tower, or the long sigh with which it ever and anon swept through the leafless tree-tops far down below him. When he was addressed, he answered with the smile of vacancy, or started as if some sudden trumpet had been blown close to his ear.

His young friends came early to him on the second morning, with intelligence that Chisney had passed a tolerable night, and that the doctors began to entertain strong hope of his recovery. Delight-

ed as Reginald was with this report, his companions, after staying with him for a little while, had tact enough to perceive that he was still quite incapable of deriving any pleasure from their society ; and they therefore adjourned with Stukeley to the adjoining room, hoping that, after being left an hour or two by himself, he might be found in a less desolate mood.

He sat down, when they left him, to make one more attempt (he had already made fifty ineffectual ones) to write to his father. He blotted three or four sheets of paper, and rose in disgust with himself, to throw them in fragments over his window. While he was idly and slowly dropping these from his fingers, his eye chanced to light on a single female figure, which preserved a motionless attitude on the other side of the way, immediately opposite to the tower from which he was looking. She stood so long—the thought crossed his mind, could she be looking toward him?—Was it Ellen?—The distance was such, that to distinguish features, or even form, was out of the question—yet the longer he gazed, the more did he seem to recognize something or other that

could belong to no one else—there was a lightness—an airiness—it could be nobody but a lady—why should a lady linger there?—There was a crimson shawl—he had seen Ellen wear one—he rubbed his eyes and strained them again, and he half smiled at himself while he yielded, but he could not resist the notion—and waved his handkerchief. The signal was at least observed—the girl took up the hanging fold of her red shawl, and waved it once and hastily toward him.—It was Ellen—What arm but hers could move with such grace?—It could be nobody else but his Ellen.

He repeated his motions, and they were again answered in the same manner. He kissed his hand, but just then he heard a loud hem close under his ear, and starting, saw three vile faces, female, yet inhuman, leering up upon him, through the bars of a window immediately below his own. “Come now, your honour,” said one of these creatures, “fair play’s a jewel; just give us a pint a-piece, your honour, and we’ll not blab.”

“D—n your heart,” answered another, “if

ye're a gentleman, ye'll not grudge us three quarts, bl— me !”

“ Now, lookey,” chuckled the third, “ now look-ey, girls, ye've spoilt sport. By Jeremy, she's off—she's off. Well, Lord love us, if I ad a sweet-heart, I shid think little on him an he couldn't find his way int' jail, let alone standin pawin away wi't heckercher—he ! he !”

Reginald shrunk back with loathing, and flinging himself once more into his chair, covered his eyes with his hand. He had scarcely sat down ere the door of his cell was thrown open, and a new visitor, an old and a grave man, stood before him. Reginald did not at the first glance recognize him. He advanced, and uncovering himself, said,—
“ Does Mr Dalton not know me ?”

“ Mr Ward !—and here !”

“ And where should Mr Ward be, my young friend ? Give me your hand, all will yet go well. You must not think you are alone in the world.”

“ The world is too kind, sir. I have not merited half this kindness.”

“ Nay, nay, my dear boy, I have been here these three hours, and I have seen everybody. I

have seen Dr Ainsworth, and I assure you he regrets nothing so much as the loss of you. I have seen the medical people, and their hopes are getting better every hour. You are done with this place, to be sure ; and perhaps that's a pity, but you have done nothing but what is honourable to you, and Oxford is not the world."

" Alas ! sir, you are little aware of all that Oxford has been to me."

" Perhaps more aware than you imagine. O, my dear, if you had but known what friends you had ! But I say no more—we must not come back upon what's over. Have you written to the Vicar ?"

" No, sir—I have tried, but I cannot."

" Ay, ay, to be sure he cannot be expected to think of some things like those of other professions—yet remember, my lad, he is a Dalton, though he wears a black coat. I am sure I may answer for him ; after a little reflection he will."

" O, sir, you do not, you cannot know how I have injured my father. I am unworthy of him."

" No, no, you must not speak so—you are a man, and you must speak like a man. I know that

you have been careless, extravagant—all of us have been so, more or less, in our time. I know that you have dearly suffered and atoned for your young errors ; and I know that if I can be of any use to you, I shall be proud indeed of serving you, for you have the right blood in your veins.”

“ I feel your kindness, sir ; I thank you for it all—I am the most unfortunate——”

“ Nay, nay, say not so, Reginald. Pluck up your heart, man, and face the wind. Life and the world are but to begin with you, after all, yet. In a few weeks, one way or other—I strongly hope the best way—this affair will be at an end. End how it may, you can have nothing to reproach yourself with ; and then—why, ’tis best to speak plainly—I am nobody, and I can’t do anything here, but if you will turn your face to the East, why, there I *can* do something ; and whatever can be done, shall be done. With your talents, and with the aid that I can give, such as it may be, everything is before you. In, comparatively speaking, but a few years, there’s no saying what may be accomplished. You may look forward to returning

home ere your manhood is more than half spent—you may look forward to returning in a condition to be a pride and an honour to all your friends; and, what I am sure you will value more than all the rest, to be the aid and the comfort of your worthy father's old age. Do you fear to leave England?"

"My friends—my father—all—all that I love, are here. Yet why should I hesitate—what right have I—what hope have I—my ties are broken at any rate."

"And you will go? I know you will—"Tis a sore thing, no doubt, parting. I have gone through it myself; and I am here to bless God, that I had to encounter it. Miss Dalton is dead."

"Dead?"

"Ay—but in this hurry you have not heard of it—no wonder. But, however, your cousin is dead, sir, and her estates are gone to Catline."

"I knew that—I expected no other."

"*Tant mieux*—Shame!—but why speak of that? 'Tis done—your race is banished like mine—we should stick the faster to each other, my

boy"—and the old man squeezed Reginald's hand very tenderly.

"And now, my dear," he added, after a little pause, "I must just leave you to think of what I have been saying for half an hour. At the end of that time, will you take it amiss, if I ask your leave to join my commons to yours and your friend's, who, from what I hear of him, must be a very fine fellow?"

Reginald, of course, could not refuse any thing to this true friend. He left him, and proceeded once more to Christ-Church, that he might hear the latest intelligence concerning Mr Chisney.

Mr Ward has perhaps sufficiently explained himself—but, in case he should not have done so, the reader is to know that this journey to Oxford had been undertaken entirely in consequence of his seeing in the newspapers the same paragraph which has already been transcribed in the preceding chapter. It may be supposed, that, when he reached the University, and learned what was by that time sufficiently public, the true state of the whole affair, his anxiety to befriend young Dalton suffered any thing but diminution. But it was,

above all, when he heard from the lips of the Provost of * * * some of those particulars of Reginald's recent conduct, with which we have already been made acquainted—it was when he heard of his repentance, embodied in voluntary humiliation—it was then that his heart bled for the thought of what this young scion of a noble tree had been exposed to—it was then, indeed, that he resolved to lend heart and hand to uprear the blossom, over which so early a blight seemed to have been hovering.

Reginald, on his part, felt, with all his accustomed warmth, the weight of kindness which this old man was pressing upon him. As for the prospects which he had been opening to him, the truth is, that our youth had, as yet, been altogether unable to bring his mind deliberately to the contemplation of them. Till he had seen his father—till Chisney's fate was ascertained—he could spare few thoughts from them—what few he could spare were Ellen's—and they were scarcely less dark, less troubled than the others. Little, however, as he could command his meditations, it need not surprise any one to hear, that even the

proposal to leave the soil of England, was not *now* capable of adding any very perceptible shade to their fixed and settled gloom. The thoughts of parting with his father—with Ellen too—what these were, we need not attempt to tell. But the die was cast—his life was changed—with them he might not be—why not have the sea, too, between? There *are* moments in which even the cup of misery is not loathed the more for being full to the brim—there are moments when the sick heart disdains to mingle its draught—when the unchequered blackness yields the best repose to the weary eye—and such were his.

Notwithstanding all this, however, Reginald exerted himself that evening, so as to conceal at least the most painful part of his emotions. Mr Ward, who, it seemed, had taken lodgings in the immediate neighbourhood, sent from thence the materials of a very handsome little repast, and spent the evening with Stukeley and our hero, until the hour came at which the gates of the Castle are closed. The best thing, indeed, about such external efforts as Reginald made on this occasion, is this—that they very rarely can be made with-

out producing some internal effect. At least, when that is not so, it is in the case of old and practised sufferers—finished artists in misery—of whom, even after all that we have seen, it can scarcely as yet be said that Reginald was one.

CHAPTER III.

THE third day was verging towards evening, as the old towers of Oxford rose once more on the heavy and languid eye of the Vicar of Lannwell. More than twenty years had elapsed since he saw them. Then, full as he was of youth and youthful hope, he did not leave them without regret—they were the same now, every outline was familiar, every tree was an acquaintance—but, alas ! how cold was the eye that retraced them, how weary was the heart to which their beauty had been dear ! I believe no one ever approached the scene of his youthful recollections, in after life, and especially after a long absence, without many pensive enough reflections—certainly few have ever approached such a scene in a more melancholy mood than now was his. He was alone, as it happened, in the vehicle. Troops of gay

young men on horseback were continually passing and repassing—here and there a solitary cap and gown appeared gliding along the meadows towards the town. Here, as elsewhere, life was holding on its accustomed course—the very bells were chiming the same tunes they used to do—every thing was the same ; the stateliness of art, the calm of nature—all were as of old. But where were the familiar faces—where was the expectation of joyful meetings—where were all the long extinguished ardours of young hope, and young ambition, and young fancy ? He was a widower and a father—and his only son was a blood-stained prisoner, in the rudest and the darkest of all these towers.

The coach happened to stop at the Mitre. Mr Dalton, however, did not stay there a moment ; but, jaded and wearied as he was with travel, and want of sleep, and misery, proceeded directly towards the Castle.

He was near the gate, when a black servant ran bare-headed across the street, and said, “ My master—my master wants to see you, sir—Mr

Ward has his compliments, and wishes to speak with you, ere you go in."

The Vicar, who could comprehend nothing of this strange interruption, was called to by name at the same moment from the opposite side, and looking round, recognized Mr Ward himself, who was standing at an open window. Nothing could be less expected than his appearance—but not doubting that he had some good reason for interrupting him at such a moment, he walked across the street. The old gentleman was at the door by the time the Vicar reached it, and drew him in with a smile and a whisper, that could not but convey some comfort to his heart.

Having assured the good Vicar that Reginald's wound had been a mere trifle, and that it was expected Mr Chisney would be pronounced out of danger ere many more hours passed, Mr Ward suggested, that he had much better rest and refresh himself a little, and give his son warning of his arrival, before proceeding to visit him in his prison. The Vicar, whose exhausted condition was but too visible in every look and motion, and whose nerves had been thrown into additional

confusion by the welcome intelligence that had been so abruptly communicated, could no longer struggle with his weakness. He sunk into a chair, and a few large tears burst from his eyes. Mr Ward made him swallow a crust of bread and a glass of wine ; and then seating himself close beside him, took his hands within his own, and began to talk to him calmly, soothingly, tenderly—as if they had been friends all their days.

Of course, the account which Mr Ward had to give of the unfortunate affair and its origin, plucked from the Vicar's bosom the sorest thorn that had rankled there. He paused for a moment, and told him the story of the servitorship too. It was then that Mr Dalton squeezed the old man's hand, and while other tears gushed in a flood over his cheek, exclaimed, " I thank God !—he is still my own boy. Now, indeed, am I comforted. Let us go, let us go together !"

Mr Ward insisted on his washing and changing his linen, and in the meantime dispatched his servant with a message to prepare Reginald for the interview. Even that warning, it will be believed, was far from being enough to make Reginald

meet it calmly. The young man was folded, trembling, in a trembling embrace. Minutes elapsed ere the yearnings of either bosom could escape in words. At last they spoke—the words were few on either side, but they were enough. They understood each other so well—syllables were eloquence between *them*.

“Reginald,” said the Vicar, laying his hand on the sling which supported his son’s wounded arm—“Reginald, my poor boy, had you no thought then of your father? Did you remember me? Did you ask yourself what would become of me?”

Reginald gazed upon him, but made no answer.

“Alas! my boy, you must have broken this heart—it has nothing but you—I am alone.”

“I, too, am alone, father—I am weary of the world—I must leave you—I must leave all that I have loved—I must wear out my years far away from you beyond the sea.”

“Beyond the sea? Will you desert me in my old age?”

“ Perhaps I may return ere then. There may still be some hope for us, dear father. My heart at least will linger behind me.”

“ What is it that makes you speak thus ? We are poor—we may endure our poverty together.”

“ No, father, it is I that have made you poor—I will not be a burden on you any more—I will do as Mr Ward says—I will endure it all—I will go to India—I will fight with life among strangers, in the hope of returning one day to you.—What can I do in England ?”

The Vicar was silent. He perceived at once, that Mr Ward had been promising his son the hope of success. What hope could *he* set against that ? Should *he* be the bar between Reginald and aught that was good ? Could he shrink from any pain that was to purchase good for him ?—His heart was in a turmoil, his eyes rested on the ground—his lip quivered in paleness—he was silent.

Mr Ward, who had purposely deferred joining them, until they should have been for a little while together, now made his appearance, along

with Mr Stukeley, and his own servant, who carried dinner upon a tray. But ere they had finished their repast, three or four young gentlemen of * * * came all together into the room, and announced, with all the clamour of juvenile congratulation, that the physicians had at last put their name to the certificate ;—that the order for their companions' liberation on bail might be expected in the course of a few minutes—in a word, that Chisney was pronounced out of danger, and that Reginald and Stukeley might now look on themselves as free.

Although this had been expected, it was surely most welcome intelligence. Stukeley called for a fresh supply of glasses, and filling bumpers for every one, declared that he should sleep that night at Chapel-house, and be at home in Warwickshire next day to dinner ; and nodding to the Vicar and Reginald, said, he should go home with double satisfaction, if they would accompany him, and remain for a few weeks at the Priory, until Reginald was completely recovered from the effects of his wound.

Reginald shook his head, and Mr Ward re-

plied by saying, that he had reckoned upon both Mr Dalton and his young friend going at once with him to London ; but added, that nothing would give him greater pleasure than to have Stukeley also for his guest there. Stukeley, however, would not accede to this ; his mother, he said, was old and infirm, and his first duty was to repair to her ; but that, in the course of a fortnight, he should probably have the pleasure of meeting with them again, as he had already taken chambers in the Temple, and meant to reside there part of the spring. Stukeley talked of his own and of Reginald's motions with an air of gaiety, that shewed how entirely incapable he was, in spite of all his kindness, of comprehending the serious nature of those consequences which the late affair had entailed. Rich, easy, careless, he already looked on the whole of what had happened as a bagatelle, so far as it concerned himself ; —and as for Reginald, having heard something of the conversation that passed between him and Mr Ward, he was more than half inclined to think that his young friend would, on reflection, find cause to consider the incident, however pain-

ful, that had brought the old Indian to Oxford, as, in the main, a very fortunate one—the immediate release at least from a condition of despondence and distress—the first step, perhaps, in the issue, to a career of independence, wealth, distinction, and honour.

CHAPTER IV.

WITHIN an hour the order for liberation came, and they all left the Castle together, for Mr Ward's lodgings. The sun had been set for some time—the carriage had been ordered to be in readiness early next morning—Reginald had but a few hours more to spend in Oxford.

The Vicar proposed that his son should walk with him to * * *, and bid farewell to Barton. The Recluse had never come to see him during his confinement, but he had sent daily inquiries, and our youth attributed his staying away to nothing but the nervous dread with which, as he well knew, he regarded the idea of being thrown into the society of strangers. Reginald, however, had feelings which rendered him very reluctant to visit * * * any more. He could not bear the notion of treading the ground from which he had been expelled—he foresaw nothing but pain, and

he entreated his father to go alone to his old friend, and speak in his name whatever was suitable to the occasion.

Mr Ward insisted on accompanying the Vicar on his walk. Stukeley also departed. Reginald was once more alone.

He waited for a few minutes, and then wrapping a cloak over him, so as to conceal his bandaged arm, and drawing down his hat upon his brows, he proceeded directly to Christ-Church. Chisney had acted like a ruffian, but he had shed his blood, and he was about to leave England, and he could not bear to go without exchanging forgiveness.

He was instantly admitted to his apartments, and, after a moment's pause, to his bed-chamber. He was sitting up in his bed, and his brother James, almost as pale as he, was standing close beside him.

The moment the latter saw Reginald, he advanced towards him, and with a very grave air, but one of perfect kindness, shook him by the hand. "This is like yourself," said he. "*You,*

Reginald, have nothing to reproach yourself with—my brother has suffered for his offence. You will embrace, and be friends.”

“Most willingly,” said Frederick, and he put forth his hand. “Come hither, Reginald. Will you carry my sorrow, my deepest sorrow, my shame, and my repentance, to her that I injured?”

Reginald saw what pain that proud spirit was stooping to. “O, sir,” he said, “let us forget all that is past. I came not hither to hear this—I only came to shake hands with you—I am leaving England, and I would fain leave nothing but kindness behind me.”

“Ay, but you *must* bear my message. Heavens!—How durst I!—O, Reginald, you know not half my villainy!”

“’Tis repented, Frederick.”

“Bitterly, ay, bitterly—my fate has been too merciful. Oh! sir, I cannot bear to look even on you;” and with this Chisney sunk down, and drew the bed-clothes over his face.

His brother squeezed Reginald’s hand, and drew him gently towards the door. “Go now, my friend—leave us.”

“ I will—farewell, sir, and God bless you, and all yours.”

“ Farewell—and yet, what said you—when do you go—where is your father?—my heart bleeds for him too—where are you going?”

“ To London to-morrow—soon to India.”

“ To London? We, too, shall be there. You will come and see us, Reginald—you will come and see Mrs Chisney?”

“ I will, sir. You have always been kind—too kind.”

Thus they parted. Reginald had one more farewell before him—one more. It harrowed his soul, but it must be.

Reginald was in a feeble state of body, but the evening breeze played coolly upon his worn cheek, and he walked even rapidly towards St Clements. He reached the end of the High Street without being recognized or addressed by any one; but there he found his progress interrupted by a considerable crowd, and, after a moment, there appeared the first of a troop of horsemen, who were coming down by the side of the gardens from Holywell. As soon as they reached the street the mi-

litary music struck up, and the crowd began to cheer them heartily, crying, "The Blues! The Blues!—God bless the brave Oxford Blues!"

"Ah! Heaven bless the pretty young men," said an old woman, who was standing close by Reginald. "'Tis but a pitiful thing to think that perhaps few of them will ever see Old England again."

Reginald pressed forward to see the march of this fine soldiery; their cased plumes and floating mantles announced them to be setting out upon a night march, and he at once comprehended that they were under orders for the Peninsula. Having got within the crowd, which, being Oxonian, made way for anything in the shape of a gentleman, he continued to walk alongside of the horses, admiring them and their riders. He could not help saying to himself, "These hearts, now, seem all to be light as air, and yet which of them is not quitting his country—how many of them must be quitting fire-sides, and friendships, and loves, and how many of them will never return—and why should I, that am not perhaps going

to wars and battles, shew less manhood than the least of these ?”

The horsemen were talking gaily as they moved, and every attitude exhibited life, spirit, exultation. Quite suddenly a young officer left his place, and checking his horse close by the foot pavement of the bridge, said,—“ Mr Dalton, unless I am mistaken.”

“ My name is Dalton,” said he, much surprised ; “ but I am afraid I must——”

“ Nay, no apologies, I pray, sir. You don’t remember me—my name is Macdonald.”

Reginald, with some difficulty, recognized the young gentleman, who had spent a day at Thorwold-hall, the last summer, along with his old acquaintance, Mr Ralph Macdonald, of Edinburgh, and his wife. “ I beg your pardon,” said he ; “ your uniform, Mr Macdonald, has made such a change upon you. I hope your father is well ?”

“ Quite well, sir,” answered the young soldier, dismounting ; and he led his horse for a little way, walking by Reginald’s side. “ The truth is, sir,” he proceeded, “ that I should scarcely have stopped you, but for a letter from my father, which I

have here, and which the quickness of this march puts it out of my power to deliver. 'Tis for an old friend of his who resides somewhere in this town—I think you are acquainted with him.”

“ Mr Keith ?”

“ The same. My father, understanding we were to cross the country in this direction, made me the bearer of this. I believe it contains money.— Might I ask the favour of you to deliver it, and make my apologies for not waiting on him ?”

“ Certainly,” said Reginald. “ I will carry it to his house immediately. You are going to Spain ?”

“ The most of the regiment is, immediately ; but I am only a recruit, and I believe I shall stay a few months behind them, to go out with the two troops that are coming from Ireland.”

“ I shall take care of your letter, but I fear the gentleman it is addressed to is very ill.”

“ Sorry to hear that ; but, however, I’m getting behind, and that won’t do. Goodbye, sir.” And with this the Cornet vaulted, with all the pride of juvenile horsemanship, into his saddle, and kissing his glove, cantered after the rest of the line.

Reginald remained for a moment, gazing after the horsemen, who were by this time winding along the London road. "How strange is this," he could not help thinking to himself. "If it had not been for this boy's father, I should never have seen either Keith or Ellen; and now, now that I am to part with them for ever, I must go as his messenger! His son sends me to them for the last time."

There was no time, however, for pondering on such things. Reginald was afraid that his father and Mr Ward might have returned even already from * * *, and be wondering at his absence. He hastened into the Priest's, and finding the servant in the door-way, had no occasion to knock for admittance. The old woman stared, however, as if a spectre had glared upon her, when our pale youth appeared; and it was not until he had fairly passed her, and entered the house, that she found her tongue to tell him that it was even as he had suspected—that Mr Keith had been, and was, worse, far worse, than he had ever been before. In a word, that he had had a paralytic affection the same night that Reginald had been sent to the

Castle, and that, though he had recovered, in a great measure, the use both of his speech and of his limbs, there was still but too much reason to fear a speedy relapse, and a fatal termination of his illness.

“ And where is Miss Hesketh ?”

“ She has scarcely left his bed-side. She is there now.”

“ And no one else ?”

“ Nobody.”

“ Tell her I am here.” But he had scarcely said the words, ere Ellen herself was at his side. She had heard his step, his voice, and ran down the stair. But now she paused and hung back, and casting her large melancholy eyes upon the ground, whispered something that even his ears could not understand.

“ Ellen, fear not,” said Reginald. “ He is well—I am free. I have but come to bid you farewell.”

“ Mr Keith—he is asleep—he is asleep now ; but I must not leave him alone.”

“ For one moment,” said he, solemnly. And then turning to the servant, he asked her to go up

stairs, and come back if the Priest awakened. The woman obeyed, and he walked into the parlour, to which Ellen, half with the air of hesitation, followed him.

But this was all over the moment they were alone. "Come, Ellen," said he, "I must kiss your cheek—I must kiss it once more—one farewell kiss. And yet why should that be? I am come to bid you farewell—perhaps for ever."

"Farewell!—and for ever?"

"Ay, Ellen—feel this heart. It bleeds,—indeed, my girl, it bleeds!" And with that he drew her to his bosom, and kissed her passionately, and gazed upon her face. She shook, her lips shook—water gathered over the rich dark lustre of the eyes with which she seemed to be reading his soul. She buried her face on his neck—her raven tresses burst loose, and fell in all their luxury upon his bosom. The boy strained her in his grasp—one agitation thrilled in either pulse. She kissed him—with a cold, moist, quivering, lingering lip, she kissed his cheek and his brow. He threw her back—he started to his feet, and, suddenly the master of himself, said, "We are

very young, and very miserable ; but, Ellen, it is not for me to add to what is, and must be. You already know that I am ruined here—that I am undone—that my hopes are blasted—that my life is changed.”

“ And all for me,” said the girl, staring on him wildly, and not weeping.

“ No, no,” he answered, “ ’tis not so, truly. Ellen—dearest Ellen, my fate is fixed. I thought myself friendless, but I have found one good friend. He is to provide for me, but that is in India—I am to go thither immediately—there is no need for doling it out by degrees. I must go to India—I must leave everything—I must leave you. What is the world ?”

“ May God in heaven bless and prosper you !” said she, earnestly, forcing composure. “ May God bless you, Dalton, and may you find that there is happiness ! When do you go ?”

“ To-morrow, early in the morning. I must go *now*—What matters that ? What matters the day or the hour ? We are parting. I can scarcely, even now, believe my own words, my own heart—we are parting. Give me one of these black ring-

lets, Ellen—it will lie on my heart, and perhaps lighten it.”

“ They are yours—take them.”

He cut off a single glossy curl, kissed it fervently, and folded it into his bosom. “ And *you*, Ellen,” he said, “ What is to be your fate?—Where, when our friend is no more, where then are you to be—am I to know nothing of you?—Is there to be no hope? If fortune should favour me, will you not come over the sea and be my wife, far away, in a land of strangers? How, where am I to find you? We know not what may yet be—we are blind feeble creatures—good may yet be in store for us. You will not forget me, Ellen?”

“ Ask your own heart *that*, Reginald!” and she sobbed aloud, and once more she threw herself upon his breast. But she, too, in her turn, could summon strength. She raised herself and spoke with a calm voice, but rapidly, as if in fear that it might lose its calmness. “ I wished to have given all my heart to God, Dalton—it was you who took that power from me, and yet that wish half remains. You have made me know what love is.

Shall I—Oh, no, I shall not—I cannot reproach you. I have tasted love—I have tasted happiness—troubled love, indeed—sad and troubled, but yet something happier than I had dreamed of—something sweeter than I had thought was in this world—and now we are to part!—Fear not that I shall love another. I shall be alone—but I shall not be all alone while I think that you are *there*—even there, the wide seas between us—time, and sea, and fortune—take my whole heart, my whole resolution at once with you—I am yours. If you ever ask me to come, I will come. If you ever come to me, you will find me the same—old, perhaps—faded—with grey hairs, Reginald, if you stay so long from me—but still, lay your hand here, Reginald Dalton, you will find this heart in the same place, and beating *thus*. Do you feel how it beats?”

Reginald, even in the present darkness of his spirit, was soothed at once, and nerved, by the calmness with which this forlorn girl spoke the language of tenderness that would not be withered, of faith that could sustain itself even in the absence of hope. He told her all that had happened

to him—he poured out the whole history of his heart. She listened to him with pensive earnestness—she partook every thing that was his—all their thoughts and fears were common. Sorrows, equal and partaken, had dissolved much even of that which is in itself beautiful in the love of lovers. They had no time for the graceful luxuries of reserve. Their parting hour had the first ineffable charm of virgin love—its purity, its fervour, its modesty, and its passion; but grief blended with these the full and sober intercommunion of wedded hearts.

Compelled by the friendless necessities of her situation to make the most painful themes of reflection familiar to herself, Miss Hesketh communicated to Reginald, in the course of this interview, a plan which she had, it seemed, meditated for some time, in the view of her old friend and protector's being taken from her ere fortune should have made it possible for her to turn to her lover for shelter. This was to join herself, without, of course, taking any religious vows, to one of those societies of English nuns that had recently been established in Yorkshire. Mr Keith himself had

approved, perhaps in the first instance suggested, the resolution ; and had already held some communication, by letter, in regard to this subject, with the Superior of the house, a lady of very illustrious birth, with whom, at an earlier period, he had been acquainted on the Continent. As things stood, no doubt, this plan appeared to our young gentleman one of the most desirable that could have been adopted. It was arranged that Miss Hesketh should, in the meantime, write to him at London, and that she should, after he had sailed, continue to send her letters under cover to Mr Ward, who would take care to forward them to India. He, on the other hand, being aware that, wherever Ellen might be residing, her money matters must continue to be managed through Mr Ralph Macdonald, agreed that he would send through that channel whatever letters he might have occasion to write, before hearing of her ultimate destination being fixed. These particulars being arranged, Ellen led Reginald up stairs, where, finding Mr Keith still fast asleep, he was constrained to entrust Ellen with his adieus. The young lady then came down again with Reginald:—

they lingered together for a while in the door-way ; but the moon, which had ere this risen in all her glory, warned the youth that he had already lingered far too long ; and he was just summoning all his manhood to tear himself away, when two figures drew near, and before he had time to think, or Ellen the heart to retire, he heard himself addressed in his father's voice.

Mr Ward and he having returned to their lodgings, had waited for an hour or two in patience, but at last began to feel a little uneasy about Reginald's absence. Mr Barton had just been telling them all the little that he knew of his pupil's habits ; but, indeed, Mr Ward had before that been pretty well informed as to these matters ; and knowing, as they both did, the scene, and, in part at least, the occasion of the recent unfortunate quarrel, it was nowise wonderful that it should have occurred to the two gentlemen, that Reginald might have gone towards St Clements. Neither of them, indeed, had any suspicion of Reginald's serious attachment there ; but they knew that he had rescued a young lady, with whom he had been acquainted, from violence ;

that that young lady's guardian and uncle was the Catholic Priest of Oxford ; and that the Priest was generally understood to be in extremity. Perhaps, therefore, Reginald might be detained by offices of friendship, which the domestic concerns of this family called upon him to perform—perhaps in these he might have occasion for their assistance—at all events, the night was advancing, and they could do no harm by seeking for him there or elsewhere.

But though Reginald immediately answered his father's question, and descended from the Priest's gate to join him and Mr Ward, Ellen Hesketh was at that moment quite overcome with her feelings, which even now had been in some measure taken by surprise. She lingered in the door-way—half unconscious—trembling and gazing, mute and motionless. The moonlight fell full upon her pale countenance, her dark dishevelled curls, and her white dress. The Vicar of Lannwell gazed upon her—even Reginald could not help perceiving, that some extraordinary interest fixed his eyes. He advanced half a step, and murmured, “ Who is this ?—these eyes—these tresses—

that form !”—but he checked himself in the instant. Reginald whispered, “ Miss Hesketh.”

“ Hesketh ?” said the Vicar—“ but what am I thinking of, boy ?—’Twas but a foolish dream, I believe—a likeness—a mere nothing.”

The door was closed. Reginald had seen Ellen Hesketh for the last time—he had just had the last glimpse of her beauty—what wonder that his thoughts refused to follow any other guidance but one ?—he heard the Vicar as if he had been speaking to vacancy, and, taking hold of his arm, forced him away, unconscious (perhaps both of them were unconscious) of what he was doing. Mr Ward, who began to suspect something of what had been passing in Reginald’s heart, only felt the more on that account, that the sooner they reached their lodgings, it would be the better for him ; and accordingly, they all without delay walked thither. There was something so imposing in the moonlight majesty of the High-street, that, even had care been a stranger to every one of their bosoms, it need not have seemed at all surprising that they traversed that scene in silence.

Reginald, however, leaning upon his father's arm, had, in the progress of the walk, recovered all the composure he had lost before. The Vicar said never a word more about Miss Hesketh; and Mr Ward, so far from touching upon that, was indefatigable in his exertions to introduce and sustain conversation that might interest the father and the son, without recalling to either any subject of personal feeling.

They supped together in Mr Ward's room, and immediately afterwards retired to bed.

They set off next morning, at a very early hour, while, as yet, there was not the least stir in the stately streets of Oxford—while the light of day was yet blended with silence profound as midnight—while all those venerable domes, towers, theatres, and temples were lying

“ Open unto the fields, and the blue sky,
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.”

It was a calm, clear, cool spring morning, and never had the scene appeared more serenely lovely. Reginald's eye, as they were driving rapidly through the city, seemed to peruse every feature

of its architecture, as if he would fain stamp it with new and indelible strength upon his memory. After crossing the bridge, he caught one passing glimpse, just one, of St Clements, the house, the chapel—and then it was all lost—

“ The world was all *behind* him.”

NOW COACHES AND CHARIOTS ROAR ON LIKE A STREAM—
TEN THOUSAND SOULS HAPPY AS SOULS IN A DREAM.
THEY ARE DEAF TO YOUR MURMURS: THEY CARE NOT FOR YOU,
NOR WHAT YOU ARE LEAVING, NOR WHAT YOU PURSUE.

Power of Music.

BOOK VII.

CHAPTER I.

NOBODY ever enters the greatest city in the world, without, in some measure, losing, amidst the million sights and sounds of that unknown and immeasurable existence, the weight of his personal cares, whatever they may be. The young mind of our hero was altogether bewildered in the tumult. Even blighted hopes and parted love could not prevent aimless curiosity, vague wonder, the oppression of magnitude, and the sense of nothingness, from fleeting over him with succeeding and interchanging influences. It was a misty sunset as they entered Piccadilly—a deep

yellow haze was gathering over every thing — but this partial obscurity, perhaps, served only to increase the effect of what it seemed striving to conceal. Edifices appeared larger than the truth — streets wider — nothing seemed to have any termination.

They drove at once to Mr Ward's, in Lower Brook Street ; a house by no means large, but furnished throughout in a very luxurious manner, combining somewhat of an oriental splendour, with that careful attention to the minutiae of comfort, which every one admits to be so peculiarly the characteristic of an English gentleman's residence. Several of the servants were people of colour ; the hangings, whether of paper or of silk, were Asiatic, in taste and in execution ; but the rooms were of moderate dimensions, and there was, in the midst of real magnificence, something that made one feel they were not meant for show, but to be lived in. The old gentleman immediately led the Vicar and Reginald to a suite of apartments, which he desired them to consider as their own ; and one of the most alert Mussulmans in the establishment,

received orders to look on himself as entirely appropriated to their service.

The Vicar had not been in town since he was a very young man ; so that the reader will easily imagine how the mornings of the few days his pastoral duties allowed him to remain were occupied. While he and Reginald were satiating themselves with such sights and wonders as might be supposed best to suit their fancy, and mutually reconciling themselves, by thinking and talking of what must be, to the sad prospect of their long separation, their benevolent host was employed in unremitting exertions among his friends immediately connected with the Mercantile Oligarchy of Leadenhall-street ; and in the course of a very short time, he had the satisfaction of assuring his guests, that they might now look upon the matter as settled. He had procured from one of the Directors the promise of an appointment, either civil or military, (which of these it might prove to be Mr Ward rightly supposed Reginald Dalton would not much care,) and this the Director had pledged himself should be given in so short a time, that Mr Dalton might fairly make his ar-

rangements for sailing with the summer ships of the same year. This Director and Ward were equally of opinion, that Reginald ought, in the mean time, to be labouring hard in acquiring the elementary knowledge of Persian and Hindostanee, by carrying to which languages the skill which his classical education had given him, he might, whatever were his particular destiny in our eastern empire, be sure to augment, in the most essential manner, his prospects of ultimate, and indeed of speedy success. Much as London had to shew our youth, nobody will doubt, that, in the present situation of his feelings, hovering as his mind was between the languor of disappointed affections, and the anxiety to repair, to himself and his father, the injuries of which his culpable negligences had been productive, the prospect of having something to engage and occupy him seriously was a welcome relief.

The Vicar, however, could not tear himself away, until he had made Reginald promise to come down to Lannwell for a week, previous to his final departure. He told him, that, in all probability, he would find his old friend Mrs Eliza-

beth established by that time under his roof; and it must not be doubted that Reginald, under all the circumstances of the case, derived some comfortable reflections from the belief that his father's solitary life was to be cheered by the presence of such an inmate. It having been determined, therefore, that before August came, Reginald should pay this parting visit, and that, in the mean time, he and his father should write to each other every week—the good Vicar bade adieu to Mr Ward's hospitable mansion, and our youth was left in the sole possession of his apartments, where his mornings were to be spent among Moon-shees and Lexicons, and his evenings in the cultivated society to which Mr Ward had already been introducing him.

This society consisted almost entirely of elderly persons, gentlemen who had, like Mr Ward himself, spent lives of adventure in India, and were now enjoying the fruits of their own exertions in an evening of repose, and, in general, of considerable luxury. The far greater part of them were bachelors, and they naturally sought in an eternal interchange of dinners among themselves,

what, if they had had wives and families, they might have, comparatively speaking, dispensed with. For the most part, they were distinguished by the possession of varied and highly interesting information, more especially in regard to the history, and literature, and manners, of Eastern nations. Without exception, they were keen politicians, and stout aristocrats. Their conversation around a board loaded with the display of every luxury that wealth can purchase, had nothing of the effeminacy which luxurious habits are so apt to bring along with them. On the whole, Reginald could not help being stimulated by what he heard and saw—the narrations of enterprize, and the rewards of merit. Yet they were old men, and there were certainly many moments when he sighed, as he sat a listener among them, for the freedom, the equality, the careless ease, and ready sympathies, of that juvenile companionship which he had so recently been accustomed to. But he was daily getting more and more occupied with his oriental studies. The more he felt himself dependent, the more keenly did he thirst after the attainment of independence. The path to that

had been pointed out to him ; it was also the only path that could lead to the happiness of his father and his love ; and he suppressed and endured everything, and hoped and laboured.

He had heard from Oxford that Mr Chisney was so well as to intend quitting Christ-Church in the course of another week, and that Mr Keith was still lingering in the same sort of dubious state in which he had left him. He had heard these things, and he was beginning rather to be uneasy in hearing nothing from Lannwell, which he supposed the Vicar must have reached some days ago, when one morning his studies, or his reflections, were interrupted by a visit of his friend Stukeley.

This young gentleman had been a couple of nights in town, and was fairly established in his chambers at the Temple, where he invited Reginald to come and dine with him the same day. Our hero consented, and, in the meantime, walked out with his friend, who had been reproaching him for confining himself too much to his room and his books ; and remarking, that his appearance had suffered in consequence of this course of life.

They spent part of the morning in seeing a celebrated collection of pictures, and there Mr Stukeley met with some ladies of his acquaintance, to whom he introduced Reginald. A very stately dowager, who seemed to be the principal person in this bevy, expressed her satisfaction, after a little time, that she had met with Mr Stukeley the very day of her son's coming of age, and invited him and his friend to be present at a ball which she was to give the same evening, in honour of this great occasion. Stukeley bowed instant acquiescence, and Reginald found himself engaged almost before he understood what the character of the engagement was.

Lady Olivia had been conversing apart for a few moments with Stukeley. She turned abruptly to our hero, and said, with a very condescending smile, " I find, Mr Dalton, that my skill did not deceive me. I thought I could not be mistaken—you have a great deal of the family feature."

To this our youth could only reply by a look of some little confusion, but the dowager proceeded, " Indeed, I thought you must be of the Lancashire Daltons. Perhaps you can give me some

news of my old friend, Miss Betty? The Catlines are in town, but I have not seen them yet."

"I am sorry to say that I have heard nothing of Mrs Dalton, except that it was expected she was to leave Grypherwast immediately."

"Ay, that's the name of their place. Well, 'twas a great shame in the young lady not to think of her aunt; but, to be sure, she could not expect to die before her. I wonder if Miss Betty will come to town now?"

"I really don't know. But I believe she is to reside in Westmoreland."

"O dear, what's the use of burying herself there? and so many old friends here, who would be so happy to see her again? I assure you, few people were more liked. I shall write her, I think, upon the subject. Westmoreland!—That sounds so dismal. No, no, Westmoreland will never do."

"Your ladyship is very kind—but I rather think Mrs Betty is fond of the country."

"Ah! true—the country's a very pretty thing in certain circumstances. But now that she has lost her brother, and all the rest, and perhaps not very rich—but as to that matter I really have not

heard—why, Mr Dalton, the country's a very *triste* affair, naturally—it requires all the agremens of a handsome establishment. In short—but you understand my meaning—Have ye heard what Miss Betty's income may be ?”

“ Indeed I have not, ma'am ; but I daresay 'tis no great matter.”

“ Well, I'll write myself—by the way, you know the Catlines—of course, of course. I've sent them tickets—you shall see them to-night.—What like is the heiress ?—Her father *was* a handsome man.—Is she like him ? Is she pretty ?—What may the rental be ?—When will she be of age ?”

“ Miss Catline is a very good-looking girl—but really——”

“ Nay, Lady Olivia,” said Stukeley, “ it is too much to make Dalton praise her—you know 'tis his enemy—his fair enemy—these Catlines have taken an estate from him.”

“ Oh dear !—bless me, I beg pardon—I had no notion—Were you so very near a connexion, then ?”

“Not at all—not very near, ma’am—but yet, I believe, we were the nearest——”

“Ah! north-country cousins—I understand——”

“Well, I think, the best thing Dalton can do,” said Stukeley, smiling, “is to pocket the affront in the mean time, and make up matters by making up to the heiress.—What says your ladyship?”

“Nay, nay, I can’t give advice as to these delicate matters,” said Lady Olivia. “Upon my word, Miss Catline will have no want of beaux, however—this *is* such an age—I protest, the youngest young men think of nothing but fortune, fortune, money, money.—Oh, indeed, Mr Stukeley, you’ve become a mercenary set—very mercenary. No love, now-a-days, (the old lady spoke very glibly)—no, no, nothing of that, nothing. Romance is all out of date—quite antediluvian—obsolete, *passé*,—but we’re forgetting the pictures. Ah! this is the Rembrandt—No, no, No. 71—’tis the Carlo Dolce—how could I be mistaken?—Let’s take a look at the sweet thing.—Will you find me a chair, Mr Stukeley?—Thank you, Mr Dalton.—Come hither,

Die—this is better than those Dutch things, an't it, Die?"

Here a party of gentlemen, with whom our Oxonians had no acquaintance, happened to crowd about the ladies; and they, perceiving that their turn *had* been, and perhaps not much lamenting that such was the case, took the opportunity of leaving the exhibition. As they walked along, Stukeley rallied his friend a good deal upon the subject he had already touched—that of Miss Catline; and assured him, that, if he really had a mind to try his fortune in that way, he had better make a good use of the opportunity Lady Olivia Bamfylde's party offered him. "Her ladyship," he added, "has an eye upon her, I saw it at once, for her son, this day's hero—but, between ourselves, 'tis an awkward cross-made spoon, and if the heiress knows what's what, she won't bite."

Reginald told Stukeley very calmly, that this was not a subject on which he liked jesting—in a word, that he considered Sir Charles Catline as a bad man, and that he could not connect himself

with him, if his daughter were heiress of twenty Grypherwasts."

"Is Lady Catline in the land of the living, Dalton?"

"Yes—Why do you ask?"

"Pooh, pooh, I only thought, you know, that she might be dead, and that Sir Charles might be come up to look for a successor."

"Well, and if it had been so, Stukeley?"

"Well, and if it had been so, I should have said you were a shrewder fellow than, I am sorry to say, you now seem to be—but I've done, I've done, my dear Dalton—I see the word Catline is no music—I'll not mention it again—I will not, indeed. I confess, however, I have some curiosity to see the set."

"Poor as I am," said Reginald, "I would give something that I were not to see them.—I wish to God we had not met this Lady Olivia."

"My dear Dalton, you speak like a very green-horn. Why, I suppose you think this is something like one of your county balls, where every body knows every body, and every body sees every

body, and every body dances with every body ; and all the ladies have the same scandal, and all the gentlemen wear the same hunt-button on their coats. My dear fellow, you're quite out, I assure you. Depend on't, you may very easily be at Lady Olivia's, and just see or hear as little of these people, as if they were all the while at the antipodes—but you've never seen London."

" I've only been here a few days, to be sure—but I have seen——"

" Nothing, depend upon it. But you shall judge for yourself. I'll give you a dozen of champagne, (always baiting the Lancashires,) for every one face that you recognize."

Reginald, conscious of his own inexperience, had strong reason for suspecting, that he was not so very much behind his companion—but Stukely's good nature was exquisite, and he contented himself with the comment of a smile. They dined at the Temple, where, along with one or two gentlemen, whom Reginald had formerly met at Oxford, there were present several of the genuine Templars—very fine-spoken young men, skilful in the mystery of punning—extremely knowing

about the Theatres, the Players, the Reviewers, the Newspapers. These people kept up such a clatter about the Chancellor, and the Chamberlain, and Mrs Siddons, and Mr Moore, and the battles of Wellesley, and the battles of Belcher, and Shakespeare, and Tobin, and Costume, and Sentiment, and Laundresses, and Conveyances, and Politics—that Reginald felt himself just as far from home as they would have done, had they been suddenly transported to an Oxford Common-room—to hear all the sort of discussion that then prevailed, and perhaps still lingers there—about Vice-Chancellors, and Proctors, and Doctors, and Schools, and Lectures, and Folio Scholia, and “*the Politics*.”

There was one of those youths, the most talkative of the whole, who took occasion to drop a hint, ere the evening was very far advanced, that he was engaged to be at Lady Olivia Bampfylde’s ball ; and our hero, it must be confessed, heard him say so with a little surprise ; for raw as he was in many things, he scarcely thought it was possible, that this Mr Tomlinson could really be a man of fashion. It peeped out not long after-

wards, that the said character had written a certain farce, which had enjoyed, a short time before, considerable celebrity—and this might, in some measure, account for the circumstance which Mr Reginald had been wondering at. But, be all this as it might, Mr Tomlinson, Stukeley, and Dalton drove to her ladyship's, (in Hanover-square,) about an hour short of midnight, and our hero found himself surrounded with a scene of splendid confusion, such as, the reader is aware, his small acquaintance with Lancashire hops and Oxonian tea-and-turn-outs could have by no means prepared him to expect or imagine.

The crowded stair-cases, the blaze of lights, the waving of plumes—the endless vista of apartments—the whole glitter and dazzle of the novel scene, affected Reginald with the same mingled feelings of curiosity, admiration, and shyness, which most people may probably remember having experienced the first time they trod the brilliant maze of the *Beau-Monde*. After receiving a silent and lofty recognition from the lady, whom, but for her curtseying to him, he, on his part, should scarcely have recognized again—such was the ef-

fect of her curls, her rouge, her diamonds, and her ostrich-feathers—Reginald found himself carried on for some time in a human tide, against which it would have been vain for him to struggle, even had he had any reason to care in what direction he might be thrown. He felt quite blank and confused amidst such a rush of bowing, curtsying, nodding, whispering, simpering *great unknowns*—and exerted himself with all the green anxiety imaginable, not to be separated from Stukeley and Tomlinson, neither of whom, by the way, seemed to be detecting many acquaintances among this magnificent mob, any more than himself.

They were carried on by degrees, however, into another apartment, where the crowd was not quite so dense, and where, in due season, the Farce-writer detached himself in favour of a small circle of blue-stockings, that were gathered round a certain lyrical poet, who sat in an ottoman among them, with something of the air of a little Turkish Bashaw, luxuriating in the seclusion of his own haram, evidently considering every whisper of his as

a compliment—every smile as a seduction. Tomlinson having associated himself to these worshippers, Stukeley and Reginald had full leisure to contemplate a real Oriental, who sat on a sofa just opposite to them, stroking, with a ring-laden hand, the finest, sleekest, blackest beard that ever imbibed quintessence of roses, and joking and laughing all the while to a single pretty woman, who sat beside him, in a style of merriment and hilarity altogether at variance with the gravity of some of his personal appendages. Our young gentlemen came near enough, after a few minutes, to hear something of the language in which this picturesque Mussulman was embodying the natural gallantry of his climate—and enough of the fair one's responses, to excite a considerable measure of surprise. The Persian was talking about his fifty wives, just as if they had been a stud of horses ; and every now and then insinuating, how happy he should be to promote the Northern Belle at his elbow to a high situation in that dignified squadron of nymphs. She was rebuking him, and asking him more questions in the same

breath ; and altogether, it was extremely visible, that the lady found something sufficiently piquant in flirting with a man, who took care to tell her every five minutes, that he did not believe she had a soul within her lovely bosom. Then came a stately Spanish Don, surrounded and followed by some enthusiasts, handsome but *passées*—and just while Reginald was intent upon the moustachios of this Member of the Junta, some one happened to tread upon his toe—"Beg your pardon, sir," quoth the culprit, turning round the moment he felt what he had done—"Why, God's mercy, Mr Dalton !"

"Mr Macdonald !"

"I hope you're well, sir."

Sir Charles Catline was leaning on Mr Ralph Macdonald's arm, and having, perhaps involuntarily, turned round on hearing his companion's first exclamation, his eye met Reginald's. He bowed very quickly, and then as quickly drew himself up again ; and Reginald could not help thinking that there was something of extraordinary seriousness in the expression of his face, as he said, "I am glad to see you so well, Mr Dalton—we

had heard bad accounts of your accident in the North."

"O, a mere trifle, Sir Charles. Nothing of any importance—not the least in the world."

"Your father is well, I hope, Mr Dalton."

"Quite well, sir. I hope Lady Catline is well?"

The lady herself turned round on hearing her name, and half shutting her eyes, condescended to acknowledge our hero; but the moment afterwards, the whole of this party moved towards the dancing-room, where the musicians were now beginning to scrape their catgut, and Reginald held back, glad enough to be so easily rid of them.

After a little while, Stukeley drew him onwards, and the two young gentlemen taking their places not far from the door of the ball-room, sipped ices and contemplated the dance. Among these, Reginald's eye, ere long, detected Miss Catline, who, dressed in deep mourning, but wearing no sorrow in her eye, was going down along with young Macdonald—Thomas, the son of Ralph, the Cornet of the Blues. These young people had been somewhat in advance of the se-

niors of their party at the time when Reginald and old Macdonald recognized each other. Sir Charles, Lady Catline, and the Scotchman, were now seated upon the same bench, and apparently busied with the contemplation of the performances of their respective offspring. More than once Reginald's eye met Macdonald's, and also Sir Charles's, but neither of them seemed to be more desirous of further communication than he himself was.

Just as the dance was over, Lady Olivia Bampfylde swam past our Oxonians, leaning upon the arm of a very little, and a very young man, extremely feeble, and effeminate in his appearance, and dressed in the very height of the fashion. " 'Tis her Ladyship's son," whispered Stukeley; " we are old school-fellows, but he's grown very fine, you see." Lady Olivia, meanwhile, had advanced with her charge to the Catline party; and it was seen, from the gestures that occurred, that Mr Bampfylde and the fair heiress were to be partners in the next dance. At the same moment, one of the Misses Bampfylde came into the room, and Stukeley solicited her hand; but Reginald, who entertained a just and modest sense of his own

deficiencies, made his apology for declining an introduction which Stukeley's partner offered him to one of her fair companions. He was left, therefore, entirely by himself during this dance, and while he was surveying its evolutions, overheard some fragments of conversation that considerably interested him.

"Ah!" said a tall masculine dame immediately before him—"and so that's the Lancashire heiress they were talking of.—'Tis a new face, Colonel—what say you?"

"Ah! 'pon my soul, well enough, really. But how the girl prances!—God bless me! spirited, but rude."

"Hush, hush, Colonel. But have you heard the history? Why, she must be a cunning little affair, after all. Only see Sir Charles—that's her father, the gentleman in black, yonder. Did you ever see such a sober fellow as he looks now? I promise you, Sir Charles Catline was gay enough, however, in his time."

"Never met him before. Was he ever in Parliament, ma'am?"

“No—I don’t think it. But you have not heard the story.”

“Story! Is there a romance in the case.—Your ladyship can’t oblige me more sensibly.”

“Colonel, Colonel, you need not look so innocent—we all know you like a bit of scandal as well as any of your neighbours—but I’ll gratify you for once—ay, now listen and be grateful. You see, the truth of the matter is, I really may say that I know it, for I have the story on the very best authority—Lord Grimsby, you know, just come from the north—well, the old peer assures me that this Sir Charles has been making a Methodist of himself these twenty years past, all to please a sister of his, an old maid, a Miss Something—I forget the name—but a daughter of his mother’s by a former marriage—and now she’s dead. And what think ye?—Why, she’s passed him over, after all this work, with some paltry legacy, and left the whole estate to his daughter—ay, that girl there; and Lord Grimsby says ’tis one of the best estates in Lancashire, for a commoner’s, I mean. Now, only to think of

that little monkey outwitting her papa so. And just look at him again—la ! how sulky 'tis.”

“ Ah ! and this is the state of things ? Well, I wish Lady Olivia success. Observe how her eye follows her son and his partner. *Entre nous*, her Ladyship's jointure leaves him but a poor Squire in the mean time. Well, I for one shall be very well pleased to see Bampfylde set on his legs.”

“ Legs ! Bless me, Colonel, how you can couple these ideas. Was never such a strange little——”

“ Hush, hush,—don't say so—a very nice little fellow—a very agreeable little fellow. You don't know what I shall make of him.”

“ Ah ! then he's in the Coldstream, isn't he ?”

“ A recruit—a mere recruit, but *attendez*.”

The dance was at an end, and Reginald, in the midst of the feelings which some parts of the above could not fail to excite, found himself saluted in the frankest and gayest style possible by the young Cornet of the Blues. This gentleman, having perhaps no acquaintances in the room beyond his own immediate party, seemed extremely happy to have got hold of another similarly disengaged.

He put his arm in Reginald's, and, reminding him of their hasty meeting on the bridge at Oxford, inquired if he had not yet seen his father, and what news he had to give him of his old friend, the Catholic clergyman. Dalton was waiving all this as lightly as he could; but the Cornet having by this time drawn him very near to the sofa where his parent was sitting, stopped abruptly and said,—“Why, father, here's Mr Dalton—he has only just left Oxford. He delivered your letter for me to Mr Keith, you know, and can tell you how your friend is getting on.”

Mr Ralph bowed his head very courteously, and said,—“I fear there are no very pleasant news to be looked for.”

“Mr Keith is certainly very ill,” said Reginald.

“Ay, ay,” returned the Scot. “He's an old man now, sir—he's well on to fourscore.”

Neither Sir Charles nor Lady Catline intimated that they were sensible of Reginald's being near them, but they were talking together, and might really not have observed him. Miss Catline came back, and resumed her seat by her mo-

ther, and old Macdonald winked to his son and hemmed, and then cast his glance obliquely significant towards the young lady. The Cornet misunderstood the old gentleman's meaning most egregiously. He instantly said, "Miss Catline, I beg to introduce Mr Dalton."

The young lady coloured the least thing in the world, and answered, "Sorry I'm engaged next set."

Reginald, who had no wish to dance with any one, and least of all with her, retreated, however, with an air that might be mistaken for one of disappointment. He caught a glimpse of old Macdonald's countenance—it was redder than usual, and he bit his lip, and, Reginald could not but think, frowned upon the Cornet. But he had no time for pondering upon such matters. Miss Catline rose in reply to the elaborate obeisance of a Guardsman. Mr Macdonald, junior, was introduced to a partner—the music struck up again, and all was in motion, and our hero glided back to his former corner, where he stood for near an hour, surrounded with people he knew nothing of, and hearing nothing that could interest or amuse

him. He waited there only on account of Stukeley, yet he could not avoid seeing and remarking something of the only party in the room with which he had had any sort of acquaintance. Various gentlemen went up and spoke to Sir Charles in the course of the evening, but he never quitted the side of Macdonald for more than a very few minutes at a time. The Scot, on the other hand, seemed to be practising all his arts of blandishment upon Lady Catline ; and young Macdonald danced with the heiress almost incessantly.

This last circumstance was apparently "*noticeable*" enough, for Reginald heard more than one of the old ladies about him asking, "Who that young man was that danced so eternally with the Lancashire heiress?"

It was long before this question, which was put by, and to, many individuals, had the fortune to be answered by any one. At last, it was put to no less a person than the Lady Olivia Bampfylde herself, who lifted her glass to her eye, and observing the young couple, who happened to be at that moment pucetting, answered, "Oh! I protest I had forgot the name—'tis a young Scotch

laird, however—a Mr Macsomething. Mac—Mac—Macdonald, I believe.”

“ Ah !” said a very gay northern Thane, imitating her ladyship’s gesture—“ Macdonald, I dare say. I see old Glenstroan there. Yes, yes, I’ve seen the boy before—’tis young Glenstroan, ’pon honour.”

“ Young *what* ? La ! what a sound, my Lord.”

He repeated the cacophony.

“ Glenstroan !” re-echoed a sentimental pair of lips at the Thane’s elbow—“ well, I do so love the Scotch names. I declare they’re quite lovely.”

“ Most musical, most melancholy !” sneered Lady Olivia Bampfylde.

“ Sacrament ! Your ladyship is severe,” simpered he of the Hundred Hills, twirling a bunch of seals and trinkets, numerous as the roll of his baronies, multifarious as the stripes of his tartan.

“ And he’s a laird in good earnest—a real laird ?” said Lady O—— ; “ for, to tell you the truth, I know nothing of them but that they were brought by Sir Charles Catline.”

“ O, a laird, ’pon honour !—A very pretty laird !—He’s a thriving old Writer to the Signet.”

“ And what’s that ? ”

“ Oh, just another little synonym. It means the same thing with *laird*, in the North.”

“ Interesting country ! ” interrupted the pensive girl. “ How I dote upon Ossian, and the Lady of the Lake ! I declare I’m quite in love.”

“ I declare I’m quite in love too.”

“ *Fie, donc*, my Lord ! one can’t speak even of a poem.”

“ One can’t *think* even of a poem, you mean,” and he bowed and twirled his seals again ; and she smiled and twirled her fan again.

By and by supper was announced, and Reginald saw Mr Macdonald pass with Lady Catline ; the Cornet of the Blues with Miss Catline ; and Sir Charles with another lady whom he did not know. He himself might scarcely have ventured, single as he was, to follow the now descending stream, had not Stukeley, who happened to have no fair one on his hands at the moment, joined him, and represented the folly of enduring the squeeze, and yet missing the champagne. Reginald and he, therefore, followed the rest to one

of the apartments, (for there were several of them) in which supper-tables were prepared, and getting into a corner by themselves, these Oxonians, it may easily be supposed, were at no loss to console themselves for the want of partners. In a word, they both drank a good deal, and sallied out afterwards in a state of considerable elevation.

The blaze of flambeaus about the door was such, that every thing could be seen as distinctly as if it had been noon-day. Just as they were about to touch the street, there arose a cry of dismay—the horses in a carriage had taken fright, and were rearing and flinging furiously—women from within screamed—chairmen and lackeys of every hue roared, cursed, and scrambled. The horses made a violent effort, and sprung forward with such fury, that the coachman lost his balance, and fell upon the street, luckily clearing, and just clearing, the wheels. Stukeley and Reginald leapt forward at the same moment—the former, being jostled by some of the footmen, was left behind—the latter cleared every thing at a bound, rushed

on with frantic energy—pursued for half a hundred yards at the same mad rate—overtook, and, dextrously seizing the bridle close by the jaw, was dragged on for a minute, and finally checked and stopped the horses' flight of terror by the mere weight of his person. Ere he knew he had succeeded, the carriage-door was flung open. Released by the arrival of a score of lackeys and coachmen from his post, he looked round—and saw—the Catlines and the Macdonalds.

He would gladly have escaped their notice—but escape was impossible on either side; and, before there was the least time for reflection, he had heard thanks, acknowledgments, apologies, regrets, and commendations from every pair of lips that he had rescued. I shall not deny, that Reginald enjoyed at that moment a certain cold and scornful pleasure. The serious and substantial injuries of the Catlines, he by this time merely despised;—the visible coldness—perhaps contempt—with which they had presumed to treat him that evening, was fresh on his fancy. He returned bow by bow, and smile by smile, and inquired,

and feared, and hoped—all with an elaborate composure of civility, which deceived not *one*, whomsoever it might deceive.

All this, however, was the work of an instant. A gentleman, whose chariot was in attendance, insisted on Sir Charles making use of it for himself and his ladies, returning into the house until it should have set them down. In a word, Reginald found himself left on the street, with Stukeley and the two Macdonalds; and, after a little pause—"And whereabouts," said the elder Scot, "are ye bound for? for us, we're in the Barracks."

"The barracks?—what barracks?" said Stukeley.

"The Scotch Barracks, to be sure. Ye ken what I mean, sauf us—Suffolk-street."

"Oh! that little place by Charing-Cross?"

"The same—and let me tell you, it's a very convenient bit—near the public offices—near Paurliament—near the Coorts o' Law, if ye hae business—no far frae the theatres, if ye're for pleasure—and a moderate place—dacent land-

leddies—and the best o' company—I was just coontin' this morning, and I've eleven cousins there presently ; and there's five captains o' companies, and three field-officers, amang them."

" Well," said Stukeley, "'tis all in my way. Dalton will go so far with us, and I roost in the Temple."

Old Macdonald with this took hold of one of Reginald's arms, and they all walked on, talking merrily together about the ball, and so forth, till they were near the bottom of the Hay-market.—“ Weel, lads,” said Ralph, as they were passing the window of a fishmonger's shop—“ Weel, lads, the very deevil's i' this sharp morning air, I believe—Od! I'm as yaupas if I had not broken bread since breakfast, Thomas—Gentlemen, gentlemen, just look at that cut o' saumon—that's nane o' your fushionless Tweed lads, or I'm meikle mista'en—Na, nor it's no Tay saumon neither—it's as far north as Fochabers, by the marled face o't—or maybe it's frae some o' the Thane's waters—Just look till't—it might mak a minister's mouth water—And look at thae oysters—saw ye

ever sic braw chiels—perfect jewels, as I'm a Christian soul!—Come awa, come awa, what signifies talking?—we'll be nane the worse of a wheen o' thae same oysters, and a drap warm toddy after them—and as for you, Maister Dalton, I'm sure ye're weel deserving o' a treat, for a' the trouble ye had stopping yon daft beasts, that were just demented, I believe, with the glaring o' sae mony flambeaux; for Sir Charles's cattle have had little experience o' towns, ye ken. Come awa, come awa—yon champagne's grown cauld about my heart, I believe. I'se warrant, they'll hae some Hollands hereawa; for as to whisky, that's clean havers to spear about it."

Reginald had perceived, long ere this, that Lady Olivia's champagne, however it might be decried, had done its duty in tolerable style upon the stout brain of Mr Ralph. To say truth, he had also remarked the evident change which Mr Macdonald's demeanour towards himself had undergone, since his parting with the Catlines; and before that time, he had heard more than enough to stimulate, and he was now willing, if possible,

to gratify his curiosity ; as for Stukeley, “ variety is charming ” was his motto ; and, in short, the Laird of Glenstroan’s motion was carried *nem. con.*

CHAPTER II.

THEY entered, and were forthwith ushered into a snug little refectory, where one and all of them failed not to exhibit the potency of that supererogatory, but still superlative appetite, which Dr Kitchener so classically denominates “the *devil-twist*.” Some half dozen pots of porter, and more than as many dozen of prime natives, being discussed, a bowl was called for, and a lively mixture of blue ruin, hot water, sugar, and nutmegs, compounded under the auspices of the old Celt. In short, all the cold formal restraints, under which Glenstroan had been suffering beneath Lady Olivia’s painted roofs and resplendent chandeliers, were in a twinkling as much forgotten, as if Hanover-square had been situated in the other hemisphere; and, *inter alia*, a colloquy of this sort graced the board.

“Here, here,” quoth Macdonald—“put in your glasses again, I say, lads.—And this is yacans time wi’ you, I suppose, Mr Dalton?”

“ Vacans ? I beg your pardon.”

“ Ay, vacans—the college is no sitting, or you would not be stravaiging about Lunnun.”

“ The truth is,” says Reginald, “ that I have left Oxford for ever, Mr Macdonald. An unfortunate affair——”

“ O, is that the way o’t ?—Sir Charles was speaking aboot that too—and ye’ve gotten your mittimus for your pains ? Od, if young folk will be sae daft as to blow each other’s brains out—I cannot say but you’re cheap o’t, for that matter—but I’m very sorry, ne’ertheless—very sorry indeed for you, Mr Dalton.”

“ Nay, sir, you will be happy to learn, if you did not hear it before, that no very serious consequences are to be lamented—I mean, serious in the sense you seem to be thinking of. The only thing is, that we have all been expelled from the University.”

“ An’ how could you look for less, man ?—Why, what could a wheen big-wigged ministers say to sic like ? I’m clear ye’re well deserving of what you’ve gotten—but I’m sorry—very sorry for’t.—Put in your glasses there—and what are ye doing here now ?”

“ I am going out to India soon, sir—and I am here studying the languages in the mean time.”

“ India?—Ay, that’s a braw field, man, if ye but buckle till’t.—There’s my cousin Æneas come home just now—no meikle turned o’ forty, I believe, and realeezed a very handsome thing—they say, he’s like to buy back Drumshargielaws again. What think ye o’ the like o’ that, sirs?”

“ Well, sir, I hope to have some success too; and perhaps we may meet hereafter.”

“ Gie me great pleasure, Mr Dalton—and let me tell ye, ye’ll enjoy a fortune o’ your ain making, man, far mair than ye could have done any other sort of one. As the sang says—

‘ O, the gear that is gifted, is never
Sae sweet as the gear that is won.’

Na, it’s nae sang, neither—there’s mysel, now—just look to mysel—when I began the warld, what was I?—What good did a’ the bluid of Somerled of the Isles, and Red-handed Donald, and a’ the lave o’ them, do me? Na, na, I was a bare-legged gentleman at the best—but I worked, Mr Dalton, I worked—I worked hard, late and early I was at

it—and now—it's no my way to blaw big about mysel—but in the course of thirty years, what have I done? Have I no gotten all Glenstroan, sir?—five-and-twenty miles in a streetch—some o' the bonniest sheep-walks in a' the county o' Ross—a hill, sir, a mountain, sir—there's no the like o't in all England—a real mountain, sir, and as mony black stots on't, as would keep Buonaparte in beef for—I'se no say how lang. Saumon fishings—twa hundred a-year upon only ae tack—a home farm that could stand aside the best o' Berwickshire—ay, and at the back of a' this, a business that's weel worth't a' three times ower—a business, sir, that was a seen fortune to ony man, though that gowk there—ay, just himsel—wad rather, forsooth, have a blue jacket and a cocked-hat, and a wheen mair idle whigmaleeries; but what signifies speaking? The Cornet! od keep us a'!—isna the very sound o't enough?—the Cornet—the Cornet o' the Blues!—awa' wi' ye, ye silly haverel!—but put in your glass though, Tam, for a' that.”

“Come, come now, sir,” said Reginald, “you are a little too hard upon the Cornet. I dare say, you'll have great pleasure when you see him on

horseback with his troop. I assure you, he both rides and looks most admirably."

"There's naething wrang wi' the outside o' him—he's weel built, Mr Dalton; so are you yoursel, for that matter—but what a daft like doing was yon, man—quarrelling and feghtin about a worthless, useless, foul baggage? Oh fie, Mr Dalton—and you a minister's son, too!—honest man, it wad be a sair heart to him, I'se warrant."

"I am sorry you have recurred to the subject, sir; but, since you have done so, I must tell you that I don't sit here to listen to any such language as this—and least of all from *you*, sir."

"From *me*, sir—What's your meaning?"

"Yes, from you, sir—the unfortunate young lady you have alluded to——"

"Young lady!—God a-mercy—is the lad demented?—Did we not see't in the papers?—some common light-skirts!"

"Hold, sir!—but I am wrong—you are ignorant of the fact. Know, sir, that the young lady you allude to was no other than Miss Hesketh."

"Miss Hesketh!—Mr Keith's niece?—Are ye serious?"

“ Perfectly serious—and I hope, now you have heard me, you will be serious too.”

The old Scotchman complied most rigidly with the last request—the moment he heard Reginald’s explanation, his countenance, tipsy as he was, underwent a total change. He bit his lip, thrust his hand into his bosom, and eyed alternately his son and our hero, with glances indicative of some disturbance within.

“ You seem astonished,” said Reginald, after a pause ; “ and yet considering the interest you take in Mr Keith’s affairs, my only wonder is that you should not have had some hint of all this before.”

“ The interest that *I* take in *his* affairs, young gentleman !—I assure you I have a very great regard for Archy Keith, and I am always very happy to hear of him, and his being well ; but I’ve heard nothing o’ him for a long while, and indeed we’ve never been much in the habits of corresponding.”

“ Of late, sir, Mr Keith has been incapable of corresponding with anybody ; he is ill, very ill—I have no doubt he is dying—I believe I told you so before. But Sir Charles Catline——”

“ Sir Charles Catline !—What, in God’s name, has *he* ado wi’ Archy Keith ?—Ha ! ha ! ”

“ I only meant to say, sir, that you were occupied with Sir Charles Catline, and seemed scarcely to hear what I said of the old gentleman’s health, when we were at Lady Olivia Bampfylde’s.”

“ Ay, ay, I understand ; but I say, Mr Dalton—but indeed I daresay ye’ll know nothing of the matter—but however, it may be so—do you happen to know anything of what’s like to become of this lassie of his, in case of his demise ?—But nonsense, nonsense ; how could you hear anything about it ? ”

“ I have heard it hinted,” answered Reginald, “ that Miss Hesketh will probably reside in one of the Yorkshire nunneries ; but you should know better, sir. Her relations——”

“ Her relations !—What are ye at ? ”

“ I mean to say, that Miss Hesketh’s other relations will no doubt shew every attention to Miss Hesketh——”

“ O, ay. Really, Mr Dalton, these are things I cannot pretend to speak about. If the war were over, I daresay, from what I’ve heard, the young

ledly would be for Germany again. Keith aye said that ; he aye said she was attached beyond measure to that country."

" I believe she is, sir ; but the war, you see, is not very like drawing to a close."

" No ; how should it ?—How should the war draw to a close ?"

" And why not ?" said Stukeley, who had been dozing a little.

" Not till I have seen a little of it, I hope," said the Cornet.

" Hold your silly tongue, Tam," quoth the father ; " you don't know what side your bread's buttered on, you havrel—you, ye gowk ! But it's weel for you ye had a father afore ye. You ! if ye had come up from Strathspey, as I did, whare wad ye hae been at my time o' day ? Answer me that, Tam—answer me that."

" Come," said Stukeley, " we must all admit that our friend, the Cornet, is a fortunate fellow. Thirty miles on end, I think you said, Mr Macdonald."

" Not an acre less, Mr Stukeley. I wish ye

would come down and try the tramping o't some harvest. Oh, man, if ye be fond of sport, we could let ye see what sport is. Paitricks, grouse, ptarmigan, snipes, wood-cocks, wild-ducks, ay, and wild-geese too; rowth o' them a', and fishing. Hoots, hoots, there's neither fishing nor shooting in your country."

"Well, Dalton," said Stukeley, turning to our hero, "I'll make your old Hall my half-way house—that is, if you take my advice, which I am sure will be our friend Mr Macdonald's advice also, and make a few pretty speeches to this young lady."

"Young lady!—What young lady?" cries Glenstroan.

"What young lady should I mean," replied Stukeley, "but *the* young lady—the young lady that has got his land—the land that should have been his—into her hands—the young lady that, like a silly fellow as he is, he didn't dance with this whole evening?"

"Eh!—What's your drift?"

"Miss Catline—that Lancashire baronet's pretty daughter, that may now be considered pret-

ty sure, I suppose, of being heiress to all those acres of the old Daltons. The knight has no son, has he ?”

“ And what if he had fifty sons ?” says Macdonald, rather sneeringly.

“ Why, then,” cried Stukeley, “ I take it the Miss would be rather less worth looking after—that’s all.”

“ It may be doubted,” returns Macdonald.

“ Why, what may be doubted, Mr Macdonald ? She’s a comely enough girl ; but if she had not the acres ?”

“ But she *has* the acres—she *has* them—they’re her own—they’re as meikle hers as Glenstroan’s mine.”

“ Ay, just so—that’s just what I was saying, Mr Macdonald ; and this is just the reason why I was tipping Reginald Dalton here a little bit of a dodge. Up, man, Reginald ;—but you’re a poor hand at that work. Why, if I had been in your shoes, I should have waltzed her off her feet ere I had done wi’ her.”

“ Have done, have done,” says Reginald.—

“ You know you are talking mere stuff—you know you are—you know my feelings.”

“ I honour your feelings, sir,” cries old Macdonald, seizing our hero by the hand. “ I honour your feelings heartily, Mr Dalton—there’s the gentleman’s spirit in you, sir. You speak like a gentleman, and to the back bone. I see’t in your face, sir. Ye would scorn to be beholden to ony petticoat for your subsistence—ye’ve a spirit aboon the like o’ that. I applaud and honour your spirit, Mr Dalton—here’s to you, my braw young man, and may ye come back wi’ a meal sack fu’ o’ rupees !”

“ Well, d—n me,” cries Stukeley, catching warmth from the Scot’s energy, “ I’ll be hanged if I see what all this mighty fuss is about. Isn’t it a much better thing to hang up one’s hat in one’s own forefathers’ house, and eat Lancashire mutton at one’s own forefathers’ fireside, than to go and be broiled among the Sepoys for half one’s life, and come back with never so many rupees, and a face as yellow as their gold—and the liver—and God knows what, besides—cholera morbus—rainy season—Pindarees. Come, come, Reginald,

stick to the heiress. Mind your hits better when you have the next opportunity."

"O Lord!" cries the Laird of Glenstroan, "What will this world come to? Did ye no hear him, Mr Stukeley? Did ye no hear the noble and honourable sentiments he was just expressing? For shame—for shame, Mr Stukeley!—I'm really concerned to hear the way you speak. I'll say't aince again—a man cannot do a meaner thing than to gang snuffing after heiresses—in certain situations, I mean."

"In what situations?" cries Stukeley.

"Yes, father, in what situations?" quoth the Cornet of the Blues.

"In what situations? And is't you, too, that's putting sic a question, Thomas Macdonald? But I'll tell you what it is, Mr Stukeley—and I'm not going to say ony thing but what everybody of common discretion will uphold me in.—I look upon it as but a dirty like thing for ony man, be he what he may, to court a woman without being able to make decent settlements. And it's there that my good young friend Mr Dalton and me are just of the same way of thinking. Od, sirs, put it to your-

sell, Mr Stukeley, could ye now, speak out like a man, could ye really thole the idea of no being master in your own house?"

"By Jupiter, I don't see your drift, Mr Macdonald! Make the house my own, and the devil a doubt but I shall be master in it."

"Ye're green, ye're green at the best. If one squire or laird, or the heir apparent of one squire or laird, marries a young lady that has either the prospect, or maybe the property of a braw estate, why, that's a' right and tight—that's just as it should be; there's nobody but a born gowk would say ought against that. How could he? But, plague on't, I'm just pleasuring ye, Mr Stukeley—ye have the same mind wi' mysell—I see't in your face—ye're only taking ye're daffin aff me, a' this while. But as for you, Thomas——"

"Me, father!"

"Ay, me, father. I'll tell you what it is, Tam, my man, since ever ye got me wiled into this daft like havers o' letting ye hae your ain fancy about these Blues, forsooth, and turn your back upon the business that has made you—that has made you, sir—ye think ye may e'en say and

do what you like; but ye'se find a difference, that ye shall, or my name's not Ralph Macdonald."

"Lord bless me!" says Reginald, "you are really getting too hot upon us, Mr Macdonald. Our friend, the Cornet, said nothing at all."

"Ye ken nothing about what our friend the Cornet said, Mr Dalton. He kens himsell what I mean—he kens that brawly, though he *may* put on that staring face. Hoot, you tawpie—will ye never learn to be a man o' sense?—But what signifies talking, talking? Gae awa, gae awa—In wi' your glasses, lads—there's a sup mair in the bowl yet."

"Well," says Stukeley, "suppose we have a toast. I beg to propose the young lady we've been speaking so much about. Fill a bumper. Miss Catline!"

"Weel," says Ralph, "that's a toast that there'll none of us object to, I'm sure—here, Tom, what are you doing wi' your glass, callant?—Ay, now, that will do.—Here's to Miss Catline of Grypherwast and Little Pyesworth."

"And a good husband to her, Mr Macdonald," says Stukeley.

“Wi’ a’ my heart—a good man till her. She’ll be meikle the better o’ that—and a sensible man, Mr Stukeley. Oh ! I wish she had a sensible man.”

“I wish to God she had,” says the Cornet.

“Ye wish to God !” says the sire, with an intolerable sneer—“ye dinna ken what’s the meaning of a sensible man, Thomas. But what signifies lecturing ? A body cannot baith ring the bell and walk in the procession. Ken ye the English o’ that, Tam, my bairn ?”

“Upon my word,” says Stukeley, who seemed to have been musing, “I should be nothing surprised if Lady Olivia made her point good after all. I heard several people remark to-night what attention she paid to this same heiress, and her son’s estate has great need, that I well know, of some little cooperating. She’s a sly hand—many a queer story I’ve heard my mother tell. There were all her nieces—what fine marriages she contrived to get for them. And Bampfylde has, after all, the first connections. It would be a marriage that nobody could say anything against.”

“What!” roars Macdonald—“yon poor shaughlin’ in-kneed bit scray of a thing! Would ony Christian body even yon bit object to a bonny sonsy weel-faured young woman like Miss Catline? I declare, the very thought o’ts enough to make one sick. Yon ane? Why, he has nae mair calf to his leg than a greyhound—And sic a whey face!—a perfect nirl! as I sall answer. I’ve seen as boardly a chiel in a glass bottle upon a doctor’s shelf. Hoots! hoots! that will never do.”

“Why, it must be owned,” says Reginald, “Mr Bampfylde has not much either of the Hercules or the Apollo about him.”

“The Hercules or the Apollo! He has mair o’ the Finnan haddock, or the sperling, I think—he, he, he!—And his head! poor creature, it looks as if it were ower heavy for the back bone o’t. And you, Tom, what gars you slouch down your head that gait? Haud yourself up, man—haud yourself up, I say. Ane might look for *that* frae a Cornet, I think. But what hours will’t be? As I sall answer, ’tis well on to four in the morn-

ing, and my appeal ordered for the morn ! Come, come, gentlemen, we'll just buzz a' round, and pay the lawin," &c. &c.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN Reginald came down to the breakfast-parlour that morning, there was a good deal of lassitude and paleness about his appearance, and Mr Ward told him, with a good-humoured smile, that it was sufficiently evident he had been guilty of some debauch. Our hero gave him, in return, an account of all the transactions of the evening, not omitting his rencontre with the Catlines and the Macdonalds, which last family he described as being old friends and allies, though how he knew not, of Sir Charles. Mr Ward seemed to be rather curious in the inquiries he made—above all, touching the appearance, manners, and deportment of Miss Catline; as to all which matters Reginald gave him as much satisfaction as he had in his power.

The postman came round that way while they were lounging over their coffee, and Reginald had

the pleasure to receive the long-looked for letter from his father. Various packets were at the same time laid before Mr Ward, and they both occupied themselves for a considerable time in reading.

The Vicar told his son that his delay in writing had been occasioned by his having a great deal to do in regard to Mrs Elizabeth. The old lady had, immediately after her niece's funeral, removed herself into the town of Lancaster, and taken up her abode there under the roof of an ancient dowager of her acquaintance. He, however, had waited upon Mrs Elizabeth as soon as he knew the place of her retreat, and his kind offer having been as kindly accepted, the old lady had accompanied him over the Sands, and was now established in the Vicarage of Lannwell, "Where," said the Vicar, "after the present irritation of her feelings shall have subsided, I have no doubt her company will be a great pleasure and consolation to me in my otherwise solitary habitation."

The Vicar then entered at considerable length into the details of that history of which Reginald

had picked up some scattered hints and fragments in the course of the preceding day. Very great surprise, he said, had been excited all over that part of the country, when the contents of Miss Dalton's will were made public, which, however, they were not until several days after the funeral. Nobody had been more surprised than Mrs Elizabeth, and yet it was from her lips, and from them alone, that, after reflection had restored her calmness, the Vicar had been able to obtain any sort of insight as to the means by which Miss Dalton must have apparently been worked upon ere she made that arrangement, which every one now agreed in considering as so strange and unnatural for a person in her situation.

Instead, however, of detailing Mrs Elizabeth's conjectures, we shall take this opportunity of very briefly introducing the reader to the real state of the case.

The truth is, that a very great variety of circumstances had combined in their operation upon Miss Dalton's enervated and irresolute understanding. She was much attached to her brother, but his daughter was still dearer to her; and

knowing, as she did, that he was not fond of his wife, she judged it far from improbable that he might be married again and have a son. Besides, Sir Charles himself had sent his daughter to live at Grypherwast, and Miss Barbara was always at her aunt's elbow. Thirdly, Mrs Elizabeth had contrived to produce *some* suspicious effects on Miss Dalton's mind, by narrating a certain story which she herself had once heard something of from the Vicar of Lannwell; and indeed the good old lady had perhaps overstepped not a little the limits of prudence and propriety, by alluding to some particulars connected with that story, in the presence of the Baronet himself.

But why dissect the workings of a weak hesitating mind, ever ready to lean for support of every kind upon that which happened to be nearest? Miss Catline was an extremely artful girl, and in the course of the eight long months during which she shared Miss Dalton's privacy—and there was no hour of the four-and-twenty in which she did not share it—such was in one way or other the result. Miss Dalton sent for an attor-

ney from a distance ; the draught of a will conveying Grypherwast not to Sir Charles, but to Sir Charles's eldest daughter, was executed, and although the lady was carried off rather suddenly in the end, her signature had been affixed to the document.

These circumstances may account sufficiently for the shade of disappointment, which, according to Squire Dawkins, every one remarked on Sir Charles's brow, immediately after the death of his sister ; as also for certain particulars already described in his deportment at that unfortunate lady's funeral. But whatever might have been the measure of his resentment at the moment, the Vicar informed Reginald that the outward show of it had soon passed away from him. The whole family had, it seemed, left Lancashire together ; they had left it, to all appearance, in the most perfect cordiality with each other ; and the neighbours had been uniformly informed that the journey was undertaken entirely on account of the young heiress's health, which it was easily believed had suffered in consequence of her very long and strict attendance upon the poor sickly lady that was no more.

Reginald, the sound of Lady Olivia's fiddles yet buzzing in his ear, smiled not a little when he came to the paragraph in which this last piece of intelligence was conveyed by the good Vicar. Mr Ward asked what it was that amused him so much, and the young gentleman answered by handing his father's letter across the table to him.

Mr Ward said nothing for some moments after he had done with the letter ; at length he folded it into its cover, and handing it back to Reginald, said, " Well, my young friend, there is some very strange news here ; but, to tell you the truth, I have just been reading a letter which conveyed to myself pretty much the same information. It is from Mrs Elizabeth Dalton, who, by the way, seems to be one of the kindest and worthiest old souls ; and indeed, as for you, Reginald, if she had been your own mother, she could not have spoken more tenderly about you."

" I well know her kindness, sir," says Reginald.

" Yes, I know you do ; and here, read her letter for yourself. And yet I really don't know whether I ought to shew it you, my young friend ; it contains something that is most probably new to

you, and if so, will give you pain. Did you ever hear any thing about what happened long ago between your father and Miss Dalton?"

"Miss Dalton?—O yes, sir," said Reginald, colouring like a girl; "my father told me the whole story himself two years ago."

"Ah! did he so?—Well, then, read the letter; for upon my word I wish to hear what you think."

Reginald read a long and most tender epistle, which contained Mrs Elizabeth's narrative of the same events which the Vicar had communicated to himself—her lamentations over the fate of her family possessions—her bitter lamentation over the Vicar of Lannwell's juvenile rashness in regard to his cousin, to which the old lady seemed to have no hesitation in attributing the whole of the disastrous incidents that had followed. It included, however, as might have been expected, sundry very keen and sarcastic reflections touching the Catlines; but the theme it began and ended with was Reginald—her gratitude for Mr Ward's conduct towards him—her prayers for his ultimate welfare.

“ There’s some prosing towards the end of it,” said Ward, “ that you need not trouble yourself with. Well, you’ve read it all, however, I see ; and now tell me seriously what is your impression.”

“ Why, really, Mr Ward, I don’t very well know how to answer that question. You can’t expect me to say that I approve of what Miss Dalton has done, still less of what the Catlines have done.”

“ Indeed, my dear young friend,” said Ward, “ ’tis extremely natural for you to feel and to speak so. I confess at first I was sufficiently inclined to be of the same way of thinking myself ; but really, when one looks a little longer at the whole circumstances of the case, why, I shall not conceal that I do think we have both been somewhat hasty.”

“ Hasty, Mr Ward?—I hope I said nothing that could be interpreted harshly about any one.”

“ No, no, my dear fellow ; and yet if you had, I should have been the last to blame you. But listen to me, Reginald : I confess that I, for one, had been inclined to think very severely indeed

of Sir Charles Catline ; and yet, now that the whole affair is out, why, after all, you see Miss Dalton has passed him entirely over. Upon my word, I can't help saying that Sir Charles must be acquitted. Nobody can believe that if Miss Dalton had acted under his influence, he, a man in the prime of his life, would or could have recommended such a will as this. Why, a man may love his daughter never so well, but why have himself omitted ?—And then consider, what's to hinder him to lose his wife, marry again, (I don't believe he's five-and-forty yet,) and have a son ?—No, no—depend on't, Miss Dalton's will was of her own fancying—that unfortunate story of her and the Vicar !—Good God, what effects these things will produce !—a weak-minded creature, Reginald—subject to strange whims, no doubt ; but at all events I acquit Catline—from my soul I acquit him—I thought otherwise, and 'tis but justice to speak my mind now.”

“ And Miss Catline ?”

“ Ay, indeed—there there's more difficulty ; and yet when one considers it, Reginald, she's but

a girl of seventeen—always brought up in her father's house—no quarrels—quite the contrary, it would appear. There is, to be sure, no getting to the bottom of such things ; but I confess I think it possible, ay, more than possible, even probable, indeed I do, that this young lady is just as innocent as her father. It would be such art, such consummate art, I really can't attribute it to so young a creature, without very different sort of evidence from what our good friend Mrs Betty seems to rely on—I can't, for my life, think of it. No, Reginald ; the more I weigh every thing, the more do I feel impressed that the poor lady's resentment against your worthy father has been at the root of the whole misfortune."

" Well, sir," says Reginald, " it may be so ; I hope it is so. But, at all events, the subject cannot be a pleasant one, and I hope you will totally drop it. As for myself, I can only say, that both Sir Charles and his family seemed to treat me as coldly as might be at Lady Bampfylde's."

" Come now, Reginald," says the old man, smiling, " might it not be so, after all, that your

own looks set the example? You have told me that you heard some hints about the will in the course of the evening; and before you went, you knew enough of it to be aware that Grypherwast had gone away from the Daltons; confess that, under all the circumstances, you might be likely enough, even without meaning it, to throw a little acidity into your countenance; and, besides, are we to allow nothing for what they might feel, even innocent, and conscious of innocence, in being suddenly thrown into contact with one, who, they might so naturally suppose, was likely to think hardly of them? It is not so easy, I assure you, to tell the difference sometimes between the blush of conscious guilt, and that of innocence conscious of suspicion."

"Well, sir, I can't argue with you,—once more, I am most willing to hope the best."

"Yes, my dear boy, and to *believe* the best—we must never put harsh constructions—God knows we may all be subjected to them often enough in our turn."

Their conversation was interrupted at this

point, by a visit of Mr Chisney of Thorwold, who, having asked for both of them, was ushered into the room where they were sitting together. Mr Chisney had had occasion to form a little acquaintance with Mr Ward during the days they both spent in Oxford; the one in attendance upon his brother's sick-bed, the other on our imprisoned young gentleman. As for Reginald, we have no need to say that the Squire of Thorwold entertained a very affectionate regard for him, and had done so for a long time. That feeling had certainly sustained no diminution in consequence of the unfortunate fracas between Reginald and his brother; on the contrary, knowing and lamenting that that occurrence had originated in Frederick's fault, and in his alone, Mr Chisney could not reflect without the deepest pain on the idea, that an innocent youth's fortunes and fate had undergone a total change in consequence of his brother's unjustifiable behaviour, and this worthy man was most anxious to do whatever might be in his power for Reginald—to serve him if he could—at all events, to shew him the utmost

kindness and attention. Frederick Chisney himself had arrived from Oxford, almost entirely re-established. The Squire came now to repeat, in his name, the expression of that regret and humility which he had himself avowed to Reginald in Christ-Church—to express his own hope that the two young men would now meet on terms of friendliness, without making any further allusion to what had passed—and, in a word, to invite Mr Ward and Reginald to come and dine with him next day in Grafton Street.

Our hero, who really had a great respect and affection for both Mr Chisney and his wife, and who had banished from his breast almost every trace of angry feeling towards Frederick, made no objection to this arrangement, which he at once saw was very agreeable to Mr Ward.

Reginald was called away to attend upon his Persic Master, but Mr Chisney not only remained for a considerable time afterwards with Mr Ward, but in the end walked out with him.

The truth is, that Reginald's kind old friend had, ere then, given Mr Chisney a full explana-

tion of all those matters concerning which himself and Reginald had previously been conversing. Mr Chisney, who had as yet heard no particular account of Miss Dalton's will, was astonished not a little when he found what was the real state of the affair. He also had been sufficiently inclined to attribute conduct of by no means the most honourable kind to Sir Charles Catline ; but now he was not slow to embrace the more favourable opinion which Mr Ward had taken up, and which, whatever might be the truth, was, we must admit, by no means an unfair induction from the facts to which Mr Ward's information extended.

Perceiving that Mr Chisney completely entered into these charitable views of his, old Ward proceeded at first, in a merely jocular way, to hint that it was a thousand pities their young friend could not marry Miss Catline, and so relieve himself at once from all worldly troubles, and at the same time re-establish the line of Dalton in their old and rightful inheritance. Mr Chisney took up this notion with a degree of warmth even beyond what Ward could have expected—ran over

all Reginald's amiable qualifications in an exulting tone—swore that if Sir Charles Catline had one spark of honourable feeling in his heart, *that* would be the one match which, above all the alliances of princes, he would covet for his daughter—that Miss Catline should be, would be, could be, must be—nobody's but Reginald's.

In fine, these two gentlemen made it their first business to discover where the Catlines had taken up their residence ; and then went both together, and waited upon Sir Charles and the ladies. In the course of conversation, Mr Ward was at pains to drop such delicate hints, as he thought he might venture on—just enough to convey to Sir Charles the impression, that the old gentleman entirely acquitted him of having used any unfair practices in regard to Grypherwast. Lightly and superficially as all this was done, Mr Ward could not be deceived concerning the effect which the thing produced on Sir Charles. A certain embarrassment, which had hung about his air, seemed to be dispelled ; and, among other matters, hearing Ward mention that Reginald Dalton was

living under his roof, he took occasion to make some inquiries as to the state of that young gentleman's affairs and prospects, in a tone of interest which conveyed no trivial satisfaction into the bosoms of both his friends.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM this time, for the greater part of a month, Reginald passed a life of more external gaiety than he had ever before been accustomed to. This mode of existence was far from being what he would have adopted, had the choice been left to himself; but Mr Ward, his friend, his guardian, his host, omitted nothing that might tend to involve him more and more in the stream; and the deference he felt towards the person whose paternal kindness had been so distinguished, would not have permitted him to act otherwise than he did, even had there been no other motives to come in aid of his very perceptible inclinations, and indeed his occasional suggestions.

Far, however, as Reginald was from entering into any of those views which we have seen Mr Ward, and even Mr Chisney of Thorwold, considered as so reasonable and so desirable—far as

he was from ever even dreaming of adding himself to the troop of young suitors with whom he soon found Miss Catline was continually surrounded, it must not be denied, nor perhaps will it seem at all surprising, that he really sought and derived some amusement from observing the manner in which this heiress comported herself in the midst of the multifarious flatteries and adulations that everywhere waited upon her steps. The kindness of Mr and Mrs Chisney was scarcely less indefatigable than that of Mr Ward himself, in contriving opportunities, which, for whatever ends they might be designed, in effect served only for the gratification of the (on the whole) innocent curiosity which we have alluded to. In a word, in one way or another, Reginald now found himself almost constantly in the society of the very family which, but a few days before, he had thought it impossible he should ever have any communication with. Dinner followed on dinner—rout on rout—concert on concert—ball on ball. And wherever he went, with scarcely one exception, he met Sir Charles and Lady Catline, and the fair young Lady of Grypherwast.

Barbara Catline was certainly a very pretty girl. She had smart blue eyes, a profusion of very rich light-brown hair, a bright complexion, and a neat figure. When Reginald first saw her in the country, her air wore a certain tinge of the sombre, and her dress was almost as punctiliously devoid of ornament as that of the aunt, whose fancies she so skilfully copied in regard to matters of higher importance than this. But now, although she was in the deepest mourning, it was easy to see that she had neglected nothing of all those artifices by which the skill of millinery has been able to achieve its triumph over sable itself. In every respect, she had the appearance of being accoutred in the most fashionable style. Her manners, too, had lost almost every trace of the old demureness. They exhibited, if not the unfettered exuberance of animal spirits, the boldness, certainly, and easy assurance of one that felt and knew the value of her independent wealth. Neither did Miss Catline seem to have the least objection to flirtation ; on the contrary, numerous as her admirers were, she appeared to have a stock of smiles sufficient for the accommodation of them all. Even on Regi-

nald himself, after frequent meetings had improved their acquaintance, she condescended to bestow abundant little marks of favour, which, had he been neither pre-engaged nor prejudiced, might perhaps have been prized more highly than they were now likely to be. But, being himself out of the question, his eyes were at the service of others, and, acute as they were, they were really quite inadequate to the task which he had assigned them. At times, he thought Mr Bampfylde, aided as he was by the unwearied Lady Olivia's blandishments, might, after all, persuade her to overlook all the defects of his person. At other times, he could not help auguring favourably for the designs which, as it was extremely apparent from the beginning, the Laird of Glenstroan entertained in behalf of his son the Cornet—designs which, from more than one little circumstance, Reginald conceived to be by no means disagreeable in the eyes of Sir Charles himself. There were moments also in which he thought it far from impossible that Frederick Chisney might be the happy man. But Mr Collins, the curate, had come to London with the family in quality of chaplain, and perhaps re-

collecting, as he did, something that he had once had occasion to remark at Grypherwast, it was no wonder that, in spite of the uniform gravity and priest-like reserve of this person's manners, Reginald's most prevailing fancy was, that the calmness and serenity of promised felicity sat in his decorous and unsuspected eye.

Collins and Frederick Chisney, if they were suitors, were quiet and unobtrusive ones. Mr Bampfylde, on the other hand, was a noisy, empty, little fellow, extravagantly conceited of himself, his rank, even his person, and, worst of all, even of his wit. He giggled and smirked eternally, and could no more conceal the least of all the pretty fancies that were floating on his mind, than express any one of them in a manner at all suited to make any impression on a clever girl, who entertained a sufficiently lofty opinion of herself. He had, however, as we have seen, an able and active coadjutrix. Lady Olivia was a woman of rank and fashion—Miss Catline was, comparatively speaking, an unpractised rustic; and who should say what might be the result of her son's qualifications, however slender in themselves, backed

as they were by all the arts of such a knowing and imposing personage as this?—Nothing, we all know, awes a young aspirant, above all a female one, so much as easy and undisputed *ton*.

Old Ralph Macdonald was, in his own style, quite as indefatigable as Lady Olivia Bampfylde was in hers. The son, who was a good-looking young man, but rather, it must be admitted, a little too much tinged with *mauvaise honte*, did not appear, to Reginald at least, to be at all so diligent in the prosecution of his suit, as his father was in aiding it by such arts and attentions as lay within his power, or rather as were consistent with the economy of his imagination. The old Scot never approached Miss Catline without a smile of the most seductive and fascinating blandness; he never uttered a sentence to her, without concluding it with a whisper of compliment; when he eyed her from a distant part of the room, there was a most picturesque mixture of admiration, triumph, and exultation in his long and stedfast glance. If any body spoke to him while he was thus occupied, he started with the air of one that has been disturbed in the most

charming of reveries—answered shortly whatever interrogative had been addressed to him—took a threefold pinch of snuff, and resumed his gaze of delight. Often, in the course of these gay weeks, did Reginald, altogether unintentionally on his part, overhear the exhortations which old Glenstroan poured into young Glenstroan's ear,—“Faint heart never won fair lady,” was the burden of his everlasting song. Even when his son was not at his side, but occupied in paying his devoirs to the heiress, the strain of the old man's meditations would sometimes escape in the humming of a tune, or the muttering of a proverb. But whenever he was at all touched with wine, the manifestation of all his feelings assumed a character of the most ludicrous sort imaginable. He punned, he chuckled, he squinted, he rubbed his hands, or, if he was sitting, the brawny left leg, which, when in that attitude, he generally supported in a horizontal position over his right knee—he volunteered snatches of Earse epithalamiums—expatiated upon Glenstroan—raved about the pedigree of the Clanronalds—and, on one occasion, even carried his enthusiasm so far, as to

insist on Lady Catline's going down a few couples of a country dance with him—but that, to be sure, was after supper—and our Caledonian had perhaps adopted Castruccio Castrucani's opinion, "That, if a man spend his days wisely, he need never be very squeamish about what he does with his nights."

One thing was sufficiently perceptible, in spite of all the bustle to which the conflict of so many competitors and their allies gave occasion, and this was, that Miss Catline had a mind of her own, and would probably, in the end, cut the knot after nobody's fancy but her own. There was something determined and even imperious in the young lady's eye ; and there was infinite composure in her whole management of herself. She evidently despised her mother—at least she announced, without the smallest scruple, opinions on all sorts of subjects in direct opposition to hers ; and sometimes accompanied this (Reginald at all events could not help thinking so,) with a sarcastic sneer that was any thing but ultra-filial. Nor, in truth, did Miss Barbara appear to stand in awe of her father much more than of her mother ; he,

indeed, being a man of sense, and a man of the world, was not very likely to make a parade of his natural authority ; yet, at times, little words and looks did occur, which betrayed that he was not the master in that quarter so much as he would have it supposed. There was occasionally something of the cold and the sullen in the young lady's demeanour, even towards him. And it need not be denied, that, disposed as Reginald still was, partly in spite of himself, to judge rather severely of some parts of Sir Charles's past conduct, this part of Miss Catline's demeanour, under all the circumstances of the case, did not strike our hero as being either very amiable or very graceful. Shall the truth be spoken at once ? There was, in the midst of all these scenes of gaiety and splendour, a certain weight of anxiety, which nothing seemed to have the power of entirely removing from Sir Charles's brow. Reginald persuaded himself, (perhaps absurdly and rashly enough,) that this was the gloom of repentance, rather than that of disapprobation. His disposition made him wish to think ill of as few people as possible ; and he ended with pitying

Sir Charles, and reserving all his bitterer feelings for that haughty girl ; and this, too, at the very moment when almost every body about him considered him as one of her wooers.

The name of Frederick Chisney has already been mentioned in connexion with that of Miss Catline ; and it has been said, at least hinted, that, although he also paid her considerable attentions, he did so in an unobtrusive and modest style of gallantry, which might, after all, be by no means inconsistent with the total absence of any designs upon her person or her purse. Such was indeed the case. Frederick was so accustomed to find amusement in flirtations, that nobody who knew him would think him serious, merely because he flirted ; and Reginald knew him at least as well as any other member of the society, in which he was at this time moving. But, in regard to him, Reginald, as entirely as in regard to any other of the group, was left to the acuteness of his own observation. There was no confidence between him and Chisney. The first time they met in London, Chisney's brother, indeed, did every thing he could to make them meet as friends ;

and Reginald had gone to the meeting better disposed than the reader may have been very apt to imagine, to forget all the painful past, and see only in Frederick, one who had erred egregiously from some sudden impetus of rash and ungovernable passion, and who had atoned for his sin by blood and by repentance. And had Frederick, restored to health and strength, retained the same feelings, under the influence of which he had, when Reginald visited his sick-bed, entreated him to bear the contrition of his heart, the deep remorse of his whole spirit, to the feet of Ellen Hesketh—had this been so, there can be little doubt, that, after a few interviews had sufficed to do away with the necessary and unavoidable awkwardness of the relative situation in which they stood to each other, these young men might really have become, not only companions again, but even perhaps friends. As it was, they became neither. Frederick Chisney met Reginald Dalton for the first time with a blush—and for several successive occasions, he never met him without betraying some symptoms of confusion. But he avoided sitting near him, or entering into any thing that

could be called conversation with him *then*—and when custom had enabled his cheek to retain its coolness in his presence, a distant civility, and a somewhat formal politeness, came imperceptibly to be the established limit of their intercourse. James Chisney, who remarked all this, took occasion more than once to express to Reginald himself his regret that it was so ; but he had too much good sense to think of battling with such things as these, and contented himself with thinking, that the embarrassment in his brother's manner might be the result of nothing but the deep regret with which he must, he doubted not, reflect on the serious consequences which his indiscretion had ultimately entailed upon an old associate like Reginald Dalton. .

But little did the good Squire of Thorwold, little did Reginald Dalton himself, understand what really was, and had been, passing in Frederick Chisney's mind.

That vain spirit, so soon as bodily health restored it to its usual energies, could not brook the idea of the terrible humiliation which it had undergone. The very thought of having stooped to

solicit pardon at the hand of one who had detected such transgression, and inflicted such chastisement, was gall, worse than all the rest, and wormwood. Besides—he, too, had been destined for the church—he, too, had been expelled from his college—and for him, too, that path of ambition had been for ever closed. For him, indeed, there remained an abundant choice of other paths—but that was the one which he had always contemplated—that was the one in which his family connexions rendered his success certain ;—driven from that, he might rise in the world, but it must be, comparatively speaking, by his own exertions, by the labour of his own mind, by self-denial of gratifications—after a long course of busy, toilsome years—and these, too, the brightest years of his life, all the years of his young manhood. And were these things which Frederick Chisney could forgive? Could he smile upon the man to whom he could not but trace all this? Or if he could smile upon him, what smile could that be but the disguise of bitterness, the mask and the consummation of gathered, condensed, inexpiable hatred!

He hated Dalton. He had injured Dalton ; and therefore, had there been nothing more, he would have hated him. But Dalton had injured him too ; and he hated him with the deliberate, settled rancour of a disappointed fiend.

And where was to be his revenge ? Before he saw Reginald in London, the very day before he saw him, he heard from his brother's lips the whole story of Grypherwast and Miss Catline ; and along with that, the expression of his brother's anxious hope, that, by an alliance with this young lady, Reginald might repair the fortunes which a cruel combination of circumstances had in every part shattered, and regain possession of that ancient inheritance, of which the caprice of a silly woman had defrauded him and his family. There needed no more than this to determine Chisney. He knew that Reginald had entertained a violent prejudice against Sir Charles Catline, and this girl, and the whole of their race. That prejudice could not have been diminished by the events which had just been revealed. Judging from himself to others, as they that combine wickedness with vanity are never slow

to do, he doubted not, that Reginald, whatever might have been his ties with Miss Hesketh, (and what these were, Chisney, in reality, knew not even now,) would embrace the scheme, which, it appeared, so many had agreed in pointing out to him, and were to lend him their best aid in pursuing. He doubted not, that Reginald would overcome his prejudices, and make love to this girl, whom he had hated ; but, “ as yet,” he said to himself, “ he has his work to begin—he has made no love to her formerly—he is starting on his race—Why must he start alone ?”

In a word, Frederick Chisney had resolved from the beginning to lay siege to Miss Catline, with all the art of which he was master. Knowing his brother's views and sentiments, he foresaw the necessity of disguising his purpose—but the purpose was taken—it was his. Could he succeed, and he was not the man to think humbly of his own chances, what a triumph would be his ! He should be master of an estate three times more valuable than that of his brother ; he should laugh at the church, and at all the prospects which he had forfeited ; and, above all, he should

have achieved the dearest and the most complete revenge over Dalton—outwit him in love, baffle him in ambition, and laugh at him and all his miseries beneath the roof of his ancestors.

Although, therefore, Chisney's attentions had been less than those of any of his rivals forced upon the eye of any observer, we may rest pretty well satisfied, that they had been neither the least ardently, nor the least artfully urged.

CHAPTER V.

MR WARD, meantime, was far too delicate a person to ask Reginald questions about an affair such as that he really supposed to be occupying the best part of his young guest's thoughts, and the old gentleman was deceived, perhaps, by the very strength of his own wishes, in regard to it, as well as by external trifles, which, in this situation of mind, he was too ready to consider as indicative of something better than mere civility and politeness. In a word, Reginald's kind host and patron was beginning to entertain very sanguine hopes of seeing a speedy and effectual termination to the youth's troubles—a termination a thousand times more delightful than any voyage to the East Indies could ever have presented.

It was under the influence of such feelings that the old gentleman amused himself with devising a *fete champetre* to be given at a little villa which

he had on the Thames, not far above Putney Bridge, and at which he proposed to assemble all Reginald's friends, and a considerable number of his own more elderly associates besides. He mentioned this little scheme to Miss Catline and her mother, and had the satisfaction to find them both delighted with it. "It would be so charming—they had never seen anything of the rural scenery in the neighbourhood of London—it would be something so new and so pretty. And then they could go by water, and return the other way in the evening." In short, the whole arrangements were soon perfected. The ladies were to go up early in the day in a barge belonging to the India House—They were to carry musicians along with them. After walking about the grounds, there would be a *dejeuné a la fourchette* at three o'clock, and the young people might spend the evening in dancing, while billiards or cards amused the senior part of the assemblage. The weather was extremely fine for the season—the skies were clear, and the gardens were just blooming into beauty. All concerned looked forward with pleasure to the variety of a gay day out of London, among

lawns, and groves, and streams. And when the day came, and it was seen that the sky was serene and unclouded, expectation and anticipation were at their height.

This party had been arranged ere Mr Ward gave any notice of it to Reginald, and it will easily be believed that he was far from contemplating the matter with much of that enthusiasm which his kind-hearted friend had imagined the mention of such an affair, at such a time, would kindle in his bosom. However, Reginald entered into the thing with a good grace, and accompanied Lady Catline and her immediate party in their barge. There could not have been a more auspicious day—there was all the freshness of spring in the air—the river was perfectly smooth, and perfumes floated around them from the opening leaves and flowers. Reginald, almost in spite of himself, was happy—happier than he had been for months. Hope shone for him in the shining sky—his imagination flew from Thames to Ganges; and the presence of Barbara Catline could not dispel fond dreams of Ellen Hesketh.

When they reached the villa, he exerted himself, as was proper, in shewing every attention in his power to Mr Ward's visitors. The *dejeuné* was served in two marquees pitched in the flower-garden, and he presided in one of these, while Mr Ward did the honours of the other. Old Macdonald, who sat near Reginald, having been sharpened by the breeze of the river, did infinite justice to the refection, and the champagne he swallowed, had so benign an effect upon him, that he was the first to propose sending for the fiddles, and even exhibited his own agility in several successive dances. The novelty of the scene, the brightness of the sun, and the freshness of the air, diffused a kindred species of exultation through all the company. Never was a gayer meeting—never did lighter steps bound on painted floor beneath the blaze of lamps. The music never stopped. Scotch reels were mingled with country dances, and the youthful couples, when they retired from the echoing turf, might recruit their vigour for the next set by reposing or loitering among the coolest alleys and the most fragrant bowers.

Miss Catline was dancing with the Cornet of

the Blues. The exercise had flushed her cheek—the Cornet was capering very gallantly.

“Just look at them,” says old Macdonald, taking his station close to the garden-chair from which Lady Catline was surveying the brilliant scene, and handing her at the same time a salver of ices—“Just look, my leddy, I’m sure it’s enough to do onybody’s heart good. I declare it’s a bonny sight.”

“Indeed, Mr Macdonald,” murmured her ladyship—“indeed ’tis a sweet evening, and this is a charming little spot ; and Mr Ward is a charming old gentleman. Upon my word, he exerts himself as much as if these young people were children of his own, and yet you know he’s an old bachelor, after all.”

“Bachelor or no bachelor, my leddy, wha could look at thae bonnie bairns without being pleasured with the very sight o’ them? Puir things, how light their hearts are now !—The world’s a’ brightness to them, that’s weel seen—Aweel, aweel, let them e’en enjoy themselves—Whatfor should they no?—They’re young folk ; daffin’s natural to them. How could we expect it should

be otherwise?" And with this he beat the measure with his foot, and snapped his fingers to the tune, with the air of one that indulges pleasant, and yet half-pensive thoughts.

"Ah! yes," said her ladyship—"we have all been young in our day, Mr Macdonald. Well, I confess I am glad to see a man of your time of life, and a busy man too, taking so much pleasure in witnessing the merriment of young people."

"Your leddyship is very polite—but od, ma'am, shall I be plain wi' your leddyship?—Do you no mind that bonny little sentiment in a certain song that's no a very new ane now a-days?—Mercy! have I forgotten't mysell, too?—'And when time'—'And when time.'—Ay, ay, this is the way o't—

' And when with envy Time transported,
Shall think to rob us of our joys,
You'll in your girls again be courted,
And I'll go wooing in my boys.'

And are na thae very bonny lines, my leddy?"

"Very much so, indeed, Mr Macdonald, and very prettily recited, too."

"Aha! your leddyship must not be ower se-

vere now—ye ken we canna help our brogue.—
Gude safe us ! I'm ane o' them that just look to
the substantial, and lets lesser matters shift as
they like best."

" Hem !"

" And did I no mak mysell intelligible to your
leddyship ?—weel, I cannot help it. Od, ma'am,
I've had other things to think o' than polishing of
my pronoonciation. There's that callant of mine,
Tam, there, even he—de'il mean him—some-
times laughs at my auld-faushioned gait of saying
things—but 'tis a daft laddie, my ledly—a daft,
light-headed creature ; but though I say't, that
should not say it, a warm heart, a kind, warm, af-
fectionate heart, that's what oor Tam had ever
since he was the height of my knee, puir fallow ;
and that your ledlyship will find to be the case wi'
him—and ane that's nearer concerned yet will find
it sae too, and that's what's nae sma' comfort for
me to think o' sometimes, my ledly—for, after
a', these are serious matters, and more especially
atween sic young folk.—Od ! look at them now,
my ledly—Will onybody deny that that's an ee-
some couple ? As for *her*—but hoots, hoots, I

think I'm barrowing 'Tam's daffin ere he has done wi't a' himsell. Ay, ay, (snapping his fingers again,)—ay, ay, 'Tam, boy, that's the way, my man.—I really think 'Tam Macdonald dances very decently, my Leddie Catline."

"Very prettily, indeed, Mr Macdonald. And there, look at Mr Frederick Chisney—Don't you think he dances very well?"

"Let me see—ay, Lord! that *was* a loup—od, he's an active chield that—and so few weeks, too, since he was thought by a'boday to be not for this world. Mr Chisney has a light foot—but when they take to the reels, my leddy—But ye've seen Thomas dance reels too?"

"Oh, yes—you know he danced one just now with that girl in the spotted silk."

"Ay, it's as your leddyship says—and, in truth, he danced it well too."

"Very well indeed, Mr Macdonald. And there's that Dalton—everybody says he's so handsome—I protest, to me—but I'm no judge, perhaps——"

"Your leddyship nae judge!—Na, na, tell that tale to the Kirk Session—"

“ The Kirk Session !—La ! now, what d’ye mean, Mr Macdonald ? ”

“ Naething ava—naething ava—mere havers. But what was you saying about the lad Dalton ? ”

“ Nothing, only that I think he’s a poor dancer.”

“ A dancer !—Lord, mem, he’s no dancer at all—he’s nothing to call a dancer—swim, swim, pace, pace—no life, no spirit.—His heart’s no in’t, mem—the heart’s the thing in a’ thing, dancing as weel’s the rest. Just compare him wi’ our Tam—yon’s dancing—yon’s the real gait.—But, to be sure—to be sure, I had forgotten ae thing, my led dy.”

“ And what may that be, my dear Mr Macdonald ? ”

“ What may’t be, my dear Led dy Catline ?—And what should it be but the partners ?—Does not that matter make an awfu’ difference, my led dy ?—Od bless me ! I would think the lad had need to be made o’ stane, or lead, or timber at the least penny, that could stand up wi’ that sweet, genty, modest, and lovely beautiful crea-

ture, and not dance, dance-like——. O ! Leddy Catline, ye may weel be a proud woman."

" Of what, Mr Macdonald ?"

" Na, na, it's no for me to be telling your leddyship a' you have to be proud o'. My word, that would be a tale, indeed. But what's the use of palavering ? I was looking *yonder*, and how could I help saying your leddyship had braw reason to be proud ?"

" Oh ! I understand ye now, Mr Macdonald—my daughter."

" Ay, indeed, Leddy Catline. What else could I mean—what else could ony body mean ? O ! mem, she's a lovely young lady. When I look at her sometimes, father as I am, I cannot help thinking O ! Tam, Tam !"

" Tam ?—what's Tam ?"

" What's Tam ?—yon's Tam, Leddy Catline."

" Your son, Mr Macdonald ?"

" Ay, my dear leddy, and no offence, I hope—But really, since we're on't, I hope it's no to be very lang now or your leddyship may have anither name—"

“ Me another name ! Mr Macdonald. I protest I don’t understand you, sir.”

“ Your leddyship has siccan a rapid way !—But what signifies havering ?—Your leddyship kens what’s what. May’s no canny, at least we think sae i’the north—there’s naebody in the north will ever even May to onything o’ that kind”—

“ May ! Mr Macdonald ? Bless me ! what are you thinking of—this is but the twenty-seventh of April, surely ?”

“ Ay, and then there’s three or four days, and that’s naething to speak o’, ye ken—and whare are we ?—In the bonny month of May, surely, my leddy ; and, as I was saying, May, though it is the sweetest month in a’ the year, is the only month that nobody in the north country ever thinks o’ buckling in—it would be looked on as a mere tempting of Providence—mere havers, a’ that, nae doubt—*we* ken that, my leddy—but folk will cling to sic fancies, when they’re ance fairly grained in them. Does your leddyship know what was the origin of the superstition against buckling in May ?”

“ Nay, indeed, Mr Macdonald—I am not able

to follow you sometimes. What is it ye are talking of, my dear sir?"

"Why, you see, my leddy, the real truth of the matter is neither more nor less than that that poor silly Jeezabel, oor Queen Mary, married that lang-legged neerdoweel, Darnley, in the month of May, and ever sinsyne, the Scots folk have regarded it as no canny—"

"Canny?"

"Ay, not suitable, not safe, not proper.—There's no Scots couple ever marries in May—the poorest body would grew at the very mention of sic a thing—they cannot thole't, that's the plain fact of the case, my leddy—'tis just ane of their superstitions, but there's naebody will ding them out o't—at least not in our time. Tam, to be sure, may think little o' the like of thae things—but yet I cannot say, there's no saying what might happen—there's no saying what thoughts will come into young women's heads in certain situations, as your leddyship kens far better than me, I'm sure; and if she was to happen not to have the benefit of your leddyship's company, poor young thing, and her a' surrounded wi' Scots folk,

she might hear things said—she might put ae thing till anither. There's no saying what even a sensible discreet young woman might fancy at sic a time as that."

"I profess I'm quite bewildered, Mr Macdonald. What are you speaking about?—April, and May, and Queen Mary, and Lord Darnley, and their wedding, which was, I take it, some three hundred years ago, and your son, the young Cornet my friend, and fancies, and Scots superstitions! God bless my soul! my dear Mr Macdonald, what *are* you talking of?—You have totally gone beyond me—indeed you have."

"Totally gone beyond your leddyship!—But, hoots, hoots—I see you're joking, mem—you're joking—you're joking."

"Not at all, Mr Macdonald—never less——"

"And 'tis just a pleasure to you to put on that face——"

"What face, Mr Macdonald?"

"O Ledy Catline! my dear Ledy Catline!—but now you've had your joke aff me, let's speak a little quiet bit of sense now thegither—the young folks a' dancing—there's naebody will hear us.—"

Od ! sic a din as that ane wi' the violoncello maks !
—When is't to be, Leddy Catline ? since other folk intend to speak, what can I do ?”

“ To be ? what to be, Mr Macdonald ?” said the lady with an air of surprise, rather too grave to be affected.

“ What's to be, Leddy Catline ?”

“ Yes, what's to be, Mr Macdonald ?”

“ What's to be, mem ?”

“ What's to be, sir ?”

“ The thing, mem—the business—the whole affair——”

“ The whole affair, sir ?—the business, sir ?”

“ Yes, mem, the business—the business—God bless my heart !”

“ The business, Mr Macdonald ?”

“ Come, come, Leddy Catline — we've had enough of this work. Time's no chuckey-stanes —Has your leddyship not been holding any serious conversation ?”

“ Why, really, Mr Macdonald, I scarce think we *have* been very serious.”

“ 'Sdeath, mem, what do you mean ?”

“ Sir ?”

“ Mem ?”

“ Mr Macdonald ?”

“ Liddy Catline ?”

“ Sir ?”

“ Hoots, hoots—a joke’s a joke.”

“ A joke ?”

“ Ay, a joke.”

“ Indeed, indeed,” said Lady Catline, half-rising from her chair, “ I believe you’ve been taking rather too much of Mr Ward’s *œil de perdrix*, Mr Macdonald.”

“ Oil of the devil, mem ! what are ye driving at ?”

“ Mr Macdonald, I really don’t understand you. What is it you have been talking of all this while ?”

“ And what should I have been talking of, mem ? Wasn’t I talking all the time about our twa bairns—Thomas there, and——”

“ Mr Thomas Macdonald, sir ?”

“ Mr Thomas Macdonald and Miss Barbara Catline—Will nothing but christened name and surname please your leddyship ?”

“ Oh, I begin to perceive——”

“ Your leddyship *begins* to perceive—Really, really, this is too much, my dear Leddy Catline.”

“ Really, really, this is too much, Mr Macdonald.”

“ Your leddyship is displeased—I crave a thousand pardons.—What have I done?—what have I said?”

“ Rather too much of both, Mr Macdonald—but——”

“ But what, Leddy Catline?”

“ To say truth, Mr Macdonald, I wish you would just look down the alley there, and see what Sir Charles is making of himself all this time.”

“ Sir Charles is away into the house, mem—I saw him going—But really, Leddy Catline, I wish you would just give me the satisfaction—it’s more natural for a young leddy to speak to her mother than her father. You must know what is to be—and really time’s wearing on—we’ve been six weeks in London come Tuesday—surely, surely, a’ thing might be arranged now—they’ve seen a great deal of each other—they’re sensible young folk—what would they stand dilly dallying at

langer for?—what for no put a' thing to rest at once by naming a day?"

"For what?"

"For the wedding."

"What wedding?"

"Their wedding."

"Whose wedding, Mr Macdonald?"

"Tam and his sweetheart—Lord bless my heart, your leddyship's daft. What have we been speaking about?"

"I promise you, I should be much at a loss to answer that question of yours, Mr Macdonald."

"Your leddyship will make *me* daft, I think. What *is* the use of all this hargle-bargling? The thing *is* to be, I suppose—there's no disputing of that."

"What thing?"

"The wedding.—My son and your leddyship's daughter's wedding."

"O Lord! O Lord! O Lord! Why, my good Mr Macdonald, I believe, you'll be the death of me—ha! ha! ha! he! he! he! ho! ho! ho!"

"Your leddyship is facetious."

“ Lord bless me, Mr Macdonald—a man of your sense—is it possible?——”

“ My Liddy Catline, I crave you tak me wi’ you.”

“ Why now—but pooh, pooh, ’tis nothing but this champagne.”

“ Champagne, madam !—I never was more sober in my life, nor, whatever your leddyship may please to say or to think, more serious.”

“ Serious—come, come—impossible.”

“ Possible—probable—*fact*—fact, my Liddy Catline,” and his face glowed.

“ A little flirtation—a mere flirtation !—I’m sure, Mr Macdonald, if the two young people choose to like it, and if Sir Charles and you——”

“ Sir Charles and me !”

“ Yes, if they liked it, and you two agreed, I’m sure, Mr Macdonald, you have seen enough of certain matters to know, that I would never be——”

“ They’ve been trifling with your leddyship,” quoth Ralph, folding his arms on his breast—
“ they’ve been playing with you, mem. Is it possible that at *this* time of day——”

“Come, come, Mr Macdonald—my good friend Mr Macdonald, you really must be a man of a *very* quick fancy, or I must be a woman of *very* slow perception.”

“It’s no for me to expound these things—you see they’re forming for a new dance. May I beg your leddyship to cry Miss Barbara till ye—I’ll leave you to yoursels—talk wi’ her—talk wi’ her calmly, mem—she’s your ain bairn, Leddy Catline, and a bonny bairn it is—talk calmly and reasonably—bid her have done wi’ her glaiketness for a wee, and let’s hear plain sense for ance.—Where’s Sir Charles?”

“You said just now he had gone into the house—but I see how it is, Mr Macdonald, you really forget every thing.”

“Not just so, neither,” he whispered; “see you dinna forget what I said this moment.—I’ll just speak a single word to Sir Charles, and be back to you again.” He bowed very low, smiled very sweetly, and pointed to Barbara and withdrew.

Mr Macdonald found Sir Charles attending a party of gentlemen at the billiard-table; and, af-

ter looking on with him for a little while, proposed to him to take another turn through the grounds, ere the sun should be set ; and the Baronet consenting, they were soon walking together by the margin of Thames, at a considerable distance from any other part of the company.

“ These eternal fiddles !” says Sir Charles—
“ I think they might have had enough of it by this time ; for my part, I wish the carriages were ordered.”

“ Poor things, Sir Charles, let them tak their sport out. It would not set us neither to dance nor hold the candle.”

“ No, no, Macdonald, I’m not impatient—not I. I wonder what Lady Catline has made of herself.”

“ I left her leddyship but this moment—she’s looking on at the young folk. But, between ourselves, Sir Charles, I was just speaking a little on a certain subject to Leddy Catline, and, to tell you the truth, I was a little surprised——”

“ Surprised, my dear sir ?—With what ?”

“ Come, come now, my dear Sir Charles—you cannot need to be asking that now. Really, I

think you should have told Leddy Catline more about the matter than you would seem to have done. It's no for me to meddle wi' family matters. I'm the last man in the world that would like to do any thing that way, Sir Charles ; but really, really, a mother, Sir Charles, and after things have gone so far, a mother no to be even let into a matter that, I may say, is all cut and dry—I hope you'll pardon me, my good sir—will you just gang away, and converse a little—talk it ower quietly—there can be no objection, ye ken—none—none. Do let my leddy hear a' about it from yourself."

" My dear Mr Macdonald, you are really rather hasty. Can't you let things take their own way for a little ? Every thing seems to be going on as we could wish. How sincerely my wishes coincide with your own God knows, and I need not tell you that *now*. Young people must just be allowed to please themselves with their style of managing certain affairs. They are very much together—you could not wish them to be more so than they are. Barbara knows my sentiments—You know I let her see what I felt from the be-

ginning. But, my dear Mr Macdonald, you know as well as I, that my daughter has a mind of her own—you can't be ignorant of facts, Macdonald—you know what the state of the case is. Barbara knows my mind. Your son is a handsome, agreeable, elegant young man; far superior in every respect, unless my partiality greatly deceives me, to any other young man she is in the habit of meeting here—far, very far superior. He is very young, however, and perhaps his modesty—but I love him the better for that—may protract things a little more than might otherwise have been—and she is very young, and every thing is new to her, Macdonald. Why hurry?—why so much haste, my dear friend? If she were evidently slighting his addresses, and preferring some other's, there might be some pretence—some colour—some excuse; but as things stand, God bless my soul, what should we wish? Come, come, Macdonald, my good friend, you are weary of London, that's the fact, and you wish to be back to Edinburgh or Glenstroan, and 'tis all natural; but, seriously, we must not run the risk of spoiling all by precipitation on our parts. *Laissez*

faire—laissez faire—and entre nous, mon ami, le coup vaut bien la balle—attendez, attendez.”

“ Attendez here, attendez there, my friend, the real fact is, that I’m not fond of dancing on at this rate so long—but what for not tell Leddy Catline ?”

“ O, my dear sir, you must really allow me to be the better judge there ; but in confidence, strictly between ourselves, Macdonald, I don’t think that Barbara would be at all more likely to think favourably of any one thing under the sun, because her mother recommended it ; and besides, how do we know what view Lady Catline might take ?”

“ God bless my soul ! You say yourself he’s as comely a lad as any o’ them—and you, Sir Charles, you know very well that there’s as good blood in his veins——”

“ I know that, my dear fellow. I know it perfectly—I know you can trace yourself to the Lords of the Isles. Every one knows that, Macdonald.”

“ Well, Sir Charles—and then as to fortune—I’m not a *very* auld man yet—hale enough, maybe—”

“ Ay truly, and long may you be so, my friend.”

“ Thank ye—but yet threescore’s threescore, Sir Charles ; and Glenstroan, let me tell you, is a gay bonnie bit addendum. There’s few properties in the Highlands that, laying myself out of view, I would say was more desirable—quite compact—bonnie land—fine pasture, Sir Charles—tenants substantial folk—and no ae plack o’ burden ; neither debt nor mortgage, nor feu, nor casualty, no, nor tythes, man, not ae baubee—nor poor’s rates, God pity ye, we dinna ken the very name o’ them. And what is’t, then, that Lady Catline could say against it?—What could she say ? I protest, I dinna think she’s sae void of gumption. But no offence, no offence, Sir Charles. What signifies standing about trifles, when we ken that the thing is to be, and maun be, and shall be ?”

“ My dear friend, Macdonald, you are warm.”

“ Not at all, my dear friend, Sir Charles—I’m quite cool.”

“ *This* coolness ?”

“ Ay, coolness—cool as a cucumber.”

“ You’re extremely hasty, I think ; and ’tis not wise in you, neither, Macdonald.”

“ Wise is that wise does, Sir Charles.—I’ll tell you what it is, Miss Catline’s fond of her play—there she’s dancing wi’ half a dozen o’ thae gay young sparks. I sometimes think—but no no—only take ye this wi’ you, Sir Charles, that Ralph Macdonald is not a man to be trifled withal. It’s not vows and professions that will do with me, Sir Charles.”

“ You suspect me of dealing unfairly with you. You wrong me, Mr Macdonald.”

“ Me suspect you, Sir Charles?—Od, man, ye little ken. *If* I suspected——”

“ What ?”

“ You know what—ha ! ha ! Why do you ask ?”

“ Because I don’t know what you mean. I can’t believe—God bless me ! Have I not done all you asked—all you could ask ?”

“ Then do what I *do* ask, too. Sir Charles, Sir Charles, take my word for’t, we’ve had enough of the appel and the longe at the wa’, and taking

the time. I know where I stand.”—(Here Macdonald stamped twice with his right foot, rapidly and firmly, but yet not quite *a la Francalanza*.) —“ ’Tis high time to proceed to *work*.”

“ To work ! Macdonald—but I did not know you were such a fencer.”

“ Aha ! you’ll find me up to mair things than that, Sir Charles. But what’s the use of havering ?—The plain English o’ the maitter”—

“ The plain Scotch, rather, Macdonald.”

“ The plain sense, if ye ken that language, Sir Charles, is, that we’re spinning out an hour’s wark to a twalmonth’s. Speak to your daughter yourself, sir, and if nothing else will do, and do directly, why, tell her the real truth of the case, and then, I trow, we’ll soon see light.”

“ Are you serious in this, Macdonald ?”

“ Am I used to be a jester, Sir Charles Catline ?”

“ Have you no feeling for me, sir ?—Have you entirely laid that out of the case ?—Is it not enough that I give you all I can, without——”

“ Without what ?—havers, havers. The truth is, sir, that Tam tells me he can get no direct an-

swer from the lady—she flirts and dances, that she'll do wi' him or wi' onybody, for aught that I see—but whenever he speaks a serious word, it gets the go by."

"Give them time, give them time."

"Time?—Time's the wise man's gowd, and the gowk's counters. Fair speeches and fleeching looks are rife enow—but I'm not ane that likes to take payment in monkey money."

"Spare my feelings, Macdonald, I entreat you—be a man, and remember——"

"I do remember. Sir Charles, you need not think to play with me."

"God is my witness I am sincere. I am anxious—I am as much so as yourself can be, sir—but you look to nothing but yourself—you have no sympathy—you would sacrifice anything."

"I will sacrifice nothing, Sir Charles. But take your choice, if you don't choose to do this, one way or other to do it, and that directly, why, be't on your own head, I shall find a way."

"To what, sir?—to what?—to what?"

"To what, sir?—to every thing, sir. Miss

Catline has a head—my faith, we may doubt that, may we? Miss Barbara Catline is no gomerel—I'll speak to her myself, Sir Charles."

"You are most welcome. But why should I doubt that—you will hint nothing?"

"Nothing! I'll *hint* nothing. I'll be as plain as I'm pleasant."

"Plain, Macdonald—will you have the cruelty?—"

"Cruelty?—a fig for sic cruelty. My word, we're no at that, man. Miss Barbara played you ae braw trick—i'my faith, she's no sae egg-shelly but she may be trusted wi' hearing a' we have to tell her."

"Macdonald," said Sir Charles, taking him by the hand—"I thought you were my friend, Macdonald, and I thought you were candid. Am I mistaken in both points?"

"In neither o' them, Sir Charles. I *am* your friend, and I *am* candid. If it were not so—but you knew the whole affair at least as well as I could tell it ye."

"Macdonald, I will make an effort. I beseech

you have patience—I will speak to Barbara to-morrow—I will speak to her at length, and seriously—but you must, you must spare one thing.”

“ Try your hand, Sir Charles. If you do the thing *so*, well—if you don’t, you know how you *can* do it; and i’ God’s name, let’s have no more shillyshallying—at it, sir, up and at it. Why put that off till the morn that may be done the day? Seek her—come away to the dancing—do the thing at once—be a man, be a man.”

“ Well, but leave me for a moment to myself—I shall follow you directly. Let me take a little walk here by myself.”

“ Weel, weel, e’en’s you like—but the sun’s down, and ’tis cauld here by the water-side.”

“ No, no. Don’t you see there are some of the young people have got into a boat—they’re rowing for pleasure yet.”

“Hoots,” says Macdonald, lifting and dropping his glass, “it’s some of the flunkys, I believe. But come away, come away, ye’ll have little eneugh time before dinner—it was ordered at seven, ye ken, and we’re to gae hame soon afterhen, I reckon.”

The two gentlemen now walked together pretty quickly to that part of the lawn where the dancing had been—*had been*, for when they reached it, the musicians were seen amusing themselves with porter-pots, and certain cold pies ;—in a word, the ball was over, and the company had retired into the villa.

“ Very unlucky,” quoth Macdonald, “ but ye may get a word o’ her before dinner yet.”

A most melodious gong, however, began its long-ascending volume of sound at that moment ; and the Scot, rubbing his hands, said, “ Ha ! already—but, however, it’s a braw bell that, Sir Charles. Od ! man, that puts me in mind of Kinrara, in the bonnie Duchess’s time, poor woman !”

They entered the house together, but when they reached the dining-room, they found that the company had already, for the most part, taken their places. A seat had been kept for the Baronet at the principal table, near Mr Ward, and he was no sooner discovered than he was called to take possession of it, thereby separated, we shall not presume to conjecture how unwillingly, from Mr Macdonald, who was fain to accept of “ a

bottom-room" (so he himself called it in the course of his inquiries) at a side-table, where our friend Dick Stukeley was presiding over a juvenile detachment.

Macdonald fidgetted a little at the first, because he had nothing but a backless bench to sit upon, but minor inconveniences were soon forgotten, and he laid all his ears in the mulligatauny. Stukeley, busy as he himself was, could not help resting his eye now and then on the hoary Celt, in the progress of the feast. How his lips reddened and glistened!—How his small, grey, piercing twinkling eyes kindled!—And the nose, how it swelled and grew, and crimsoned, and purpled, and at last absolutely blackened! The Sherry was "auld and rich," such were his murmured ejaculations of satisfaction:—the Madeira had not "doubled the Cape for nothing:"—the *Constancia* was "a perfect cordial:"—the Hock was "a grand stimulus, Mr Stukeley:"—the champagne was "enough to tempt Abraham, man." In a word, Mr Macdonald of Glenstroan was in the seventh heaven.—

He was in the act of washing down his Par-

mesan with a bumper of "particular" port, when a low whisper, that had been for half a minute travelling round the room, approached his ear.— "Miss Catline!—where is Miss Catline?—Is Miss Catline at that table?—Lady Catline wishes to know where Miss Catline is." The whisper gained strength as it spread. It had almost ceased to be a whisper ere it reached Macdonald.

"Miss Catline an't at either of the side-tables, your ladyship," said Ward's favourite old Mus-sulman.

"Where is Barbara Catline?" said her ladyship, half rising from her seat, and looking round very anxiously. "She's not at this table, surely?"

"Nor at this," says a voice from one corner of the room.

"Nor here," quoth Stukeley. "Do you see Miss Catline anywhere, Mr Macdonald?"

"Miss Catline?—why, what? where is she?"

MR WARD.

O, ma'am, I suppose there was no appearance of room at the tables. We sat down in such a hurry, you know. Pray, go out, some of you, and let Miss Catline know. Upon my word, I'm quite ashamed. Such a hurry, to be sure.

MUSSULMAN.

Plenty of room, your honour—plenty of seats vacant—could put up several at the round table yet.

MR WARD.

Come, come—Look, look—What is this ?

LADY CATLINE.

O ! Mr Ward—'tis so foolish. Sir Charles, Sir Charles—I beg you would just——

SIR CHARLES.

Pooh ! pooh ! What are you thinking of, my love ? Barbara will be here this moment. Is there no table in another room ?

MUSSULMAN.

None, your honour, none—all company here.

LADY CATLINE.

O, my dear Sir Charles—O, my dear Mr Ward—but 'tis so foolish—May I beg a glass of water ?—Where is Barbara ?

MACDONALD.

Dear me—what's a' this now ?—What's a' this buzz about ?

STUKELEY.

'Tis Miss Catline, sir. Nobody seems to know what's become of Miss Catline.

MACDONALD, (*standing up.*)

Whare's our Tam?—Tam Macdonald, I say.

CORNET.

Here I'm, father—What is it, sir?

MACDONALD.

Nothing, nothing. Sit your ways down, you gowk.

STUKELEY.

O, sit down yourself, Mr Macdonald—'tis a mere trifle—the young lady is not far off, I dare say.

MACDONALD.

Lord bless you! it was only because I heard Lady Catline. But where is she?

STUKELEY, (*aside to MACDONALD.*)

God knows!—Is there nobody else amissing, I wonder?

MACDONALD, (*aside to STUKELEY.*)

Hoots! hoots!—What are you meaning, Mr Stukeley, wi' that cunning look of yours?—Ye're a queer fallow, man.

STUKELEY, (*aside to MACDONALD.*)

By Jupiter! Look at Lady Catline's face.—Nay, look at Sir Charles—he's been out of the room too.

MACDONALD.

Are we a' here?—God's mercy ! the hail room's commovit. Stand out o' my gait there, Tam—Keep down that head o' yours.

CORNET.

Good God ! father——

MACDONALD.

Good God !—it sets you well.

Enter MUSSULMAN, (aside to LADY CATLINE.)

Please your ladyship, the maid says that Miss Catline's cloak and bonnet are not in the blue room.

LADY CATLINE.

Oh ! oh ! oh !

SIR CHARLES CATLINE.

Lady Catline !—Julia !—Julia, my love !

LADY CATLINE.

She's gone—she's off—she's lost—Barbara ! Barbara !

MACDONALD.

Nonsense, nonsense—(*aside.*)—How that woman squeals !

MR WARD.

The gong !—the gong, immediately—run, run, search the shrubbery. (*Gong without.*)

MR COLLINS.

My dear Lady Catline, I'll run this moment. I pray you, be composed—I'll just run round the walks. (*Exit.*)

MACDONALD.

Mr Dalton ! Mr Dalton, I say—where's Mr Dalton ?

STUKELEY, (*aside to MACDONALD.*)

I see Reginald—that's he by the window.

MACDONALD.

Oo, ay—oo, ay—what am I saying ?—Lord keep us a' !—What's this ?

STUKELEY, (*aside to MACDONALD.*)

What the devil is Frederick Chisney making of himself in this row—where is he ?

MACDONALD.

Mr Chisney !—Mr Chisney !—Where are you ?

LADY CATLINE.

Mr Chisney ! Oh ! where is Mr Chisney ?—Oh ! oh !

MR WARD.

Mr Chisney !—Is Mr Chisney at the side-table ?

SIR CHARLES CATLINE, (*jumping over a bench.*)

Mr Chisney !—

Now was the scene of utter confusion—twenty people leaving their places—some leaping over tables and chairs—bottles smashed—china shattered—talking, raving, screaming, shrieking, prancing, pushing, stamping, dancing. In an instant, the greater part of the company was dispersed—Gong sounding, bells ringing—shouting, roaring—women fanning, men rushing—Lady Catline fainting—total hubbub!—A few only, a very select few, remaining all the while as quiet as if nothing had happened. Some old East India Directors kept hobnobbing away with the most perfect indifference; and some very fine ladies looking round, with eyes of that kind of calm disdain, which one sometimes remarks in the side-boxes, when there is a squabble between a sailor and some tailors in the shilling-gallery.

In the course of a few minutes, every part of the grounds had been traversed by a score of searchers. Sir Charles and Mr Macdonald, who had both been exceedingly active, now met, each red in the face with running—hot, breathless, palpitating, and panting.

MACDONALD.

So, sir—so, sir—so this is the way of it, sir !
The boat——

SIR CHARLES.

The boat !—Good God, Mr Macdonald !

MACDONALD.

Good God, Sir Charles Catline !—But why
do you stand puffing and blowing there, sir ?

SIR CHARLES.

O Macdonald, pity me, pity me !—What of
the boat ?

MACDONALD.

They're off in't—it's lying on the other side of
the water—they've found one of the scoundrel's
gloves.

SIR CHARLES.

Good God !—Order the horses. O Macdo-
nald, order the horses !—I'm undone—I'm ruin-
ed !

MACDONALD (*coolly.*)

Thereafter as it may be, Sir Charles Catline.
'Sdeath, sir—I have a great mind—Ay, stare
away, man. Sir, I've been treated in a black-
guard fashion.

SIR CHARLES.

Sir?—

MACDONALD.

Ay, *sir*!—What the devil?—but don't I understand you, *sir*?—Ay, you, *sir*, and you all, *sir*?—By the red hand!—but wheest, wheest.—We'll have another time.

Enter LADY CATLINE.

LADY CATLINE.

O! O! O Sir Charles, they're off to Gretna-Green. Run, run—ride, ride.—My dear Mr Macdonald!—O Sir Charles!—oh!

MACDONALD.

Come, come, mem—this will not do. Here, some of you there, attend to the lady.—Sir Charles!

SIR CHARLES.

I call heaven to witness, Macdonald!—But I'm gone. You shall see—you shall see—it may not be too late yet.

MACDONALD.

Take your time, *sir*—you seem resolved on that part o't. 'Sdeath, *sir*—Is this a time for you to

put your hands in your breeks?—Be off, sir,
or——

SIR CHARLES.

Macdonald !—

MACDONALD.

Or you know what. D—n it, sir, are you delirious?—Yonder's the stables—fling your leg over the first beast you get haud o'.—Run, I say—Are you doited? Are you daft? Are you demented?—A curse!

A crowd of ladies and gentlemen here surrounded our group—Sir Charles, staring wildly about him for a moment, ran at a furious rate towards the stables. Mr Macdonald followed him, and both were seen, an instant afterwards, galloping towards the gate. Lady Catline went through a long series of hysterical sighing, laughter, weeping, and swooning, and ended with refusing to enter the house, and insisting upon going directly to London after her husband. Mr Collins, whose face betrayed the most consummate union of surprise, terror, and affliction, was called up by her ladyship to accompany her; and obeyed, evident-

ly unfit to be of any service, or rather ignorant of what services the moment required. However, off drove the carriage. Mr and Mrs Chisney of Thorwold also disappeared; and Reginald Dalton walked towards the villa, in the midst of such a buzz of whispers, such an uplifting of hands and eyes, such wondering, and sneering and jeering physiognomies, as an elopement may be supposed to have excited and animated among such an assemblage.

He had been one of the first that joined Macdonald and the Catlines after their last meeting, and he had witnessed something of the old Scotchman's fiery and passionate method of comporting himself upon that occasion—he had also seen him galloping away with Sir Charles on a coach-horse—it was not, therefore, without considerable surprise, that he saw Mr Macdonald sitting once more in Mr Ward's dining-room, in not much more than half an hour. By this time, the company had resumed their places, and all manner of external decorum and composure—the conversation, of course, being split into twenty little committees, who were discussing the late incident in

as many different tones of commentation. Macdonald had stolen in softly, and taken possession of the first seat he found unoccupied—it happened to be close to Reginald Dalton, who, being engaged in talking with Dick Stukeley, did not observe him for a second or two after he had sat down.

“ Good God !” said he—“ *You* here, Mr Macdonald ?—Sure you went off with Sir Charles.—Is there any news ?”

“ Nane, nane ava’, Mr Dalton. There’ll be nane this gay while, I’m thinking.”

“ Bless me, I thought you had gone in the pursuit too.”

“ Atweel, I would have gone on, if I had thought I could be of any use ; but what service could I be of, Mr Dalton ?—Ye ken they were a good three hours a-head. I doubt, I doubt, he’ll never overtake them on this side of the Border. Honest man, I’m sure naebody can feel mair for Sir Charles.”

“ *He* follows on, however ?”

“ Oo, ay—best to have nothing to reproach himself wi’, ye ken. He *may* come up wi’ them.

I dinna look for't, for one—three hours is an awfu' start. Lord keep us, they'll be at Barnet ere now—sic horses and sic roads, ye ken—and I'se warrant, they'll make the best o' them."

"You may depend on't, Chisney knows what he's about."

"Hem, hem—I'm not quite—But come, come, Mr Dalton, it's nae brewst o' our barm—ye're keeping the bottle ower lang beside you, my friend. 'Faith, I'll be nane the warse of a glass or twa, after a' this hubblesheiw. I declare my mouth's a perfect whistle."

"Here's the claret, Mr Macdonald—a sly fellow, our friend Chisney—Isn't he?"

"Ay, ay, in truth, he *is* a cunning chield. My word, he's been quiet wi' his wooing too. O the cunning thief—ha! ha! ha!"

"'Tis no joke for Sir Charles, however, Mr Macdonald."

"Joke?—nor it's no joke for me neither. Poor man, I'm really distressed—and yet it was so neatly done i'the baggage—I cannot help laughing, when I think of us a' sitting here, eating and drinking, and never a body missing them till

the cheese was on the table. Ah ! he's a true genius, yon lad. Let him alone—a real fox, a real fox, Mr Dalton—and him as poor as Lazarus too, I take it. My word, he thinks he has feathered his nest brawly now.”

“ Thinks, Mr Macdonald ?—Why, you know what a fine estate it is ?”

“ A capital estate—a grand auld ha' house—a bonny park—plate and plenishing—and a bonny little lassie too. My word, he may weel be cadgy in the chaise wi' her—ha ! ha !”

“ Indeed, Mr Macdonald, I don't see the thing quite in so ludicrous a point of view. And why, above all, do the affair in this discreditable way ? She's her own mistress—the land's her own. Why not do it all openly ? Sir Charles, I dare say, could have no great objection to Chisney's family and connexions.”

“ Chisney's fiddle-sticks !—But what signifies speaking ?—We'll see how it turns out—we'll see if he overtakes them.”

“ Why, even if he does, Mr Macdonald, I don't see how that will alter the case much. If the young lady be resolved—and especially after

all this exposure—why what would be the use of Sir Charles trying to stop it now?”

“Pooh, pooh!—If he comes up wi’ them on this side of the water of Eden, we’ll see what we’ll see. There’s mony a lassie has played a pliskie of that kind, and been caught again, and sobered, and made a good quiet douce mother to another man’s bairns in the hinder-end.”

“Miss Catline’s a determined sort of miss, Mr Macdonald, and she feels her power. I don’t think she’ll be apt to give in—but, as you say, tis not our affair.”

“No, no, let them drink that draw the cork, Mr Dalton. But I’m distressed for poor Sir Charles—a man to be made a fool o’ by his ain flesh and blood—’tis very hard, my young friend—but it’s only a paurent’s heart can sympatheesee with these things. ’Tis a sore case, Mr Dalton—oh! oh! There’s little sense o’ duty amang bairns now-a-days—their ain idle fancies, that’s all in all with them—they a’ think themselves wiser than them that begot them, my friend. ’Tis a sair pity it should be sae!—and maybe some of them will rue’t themselves or a’ be done—But the

bottle aye sticks wi' you, Mr Dalton.—O yes, man, by the time ye've lived in this warld as lang as I've done, ye'll all change your note on mony matters. Young folk are so fu' o' themselves, little, little do they think what a paurent feels—'tis a thing they have no consideration of, Mr Dalton.—That's really very bonny claret of the old gentleman's.—Oh dear, 'tis a queer warld this —Rax me the nutcrackers, my dear young friend. Oh dear, and just to think of poor Lady Catline !”

BOOK VIII.

CHAPTER I.

WHATEVER notions our hero might have formed by this time of the character of Mr Ralph Macdonald, every thing he had had occasion to see of his son, (and we already know how much they had been thrown together) had tended to impress him with a very favourable opinion of the young gentleman. Shy and embarrassed, when in the presence of his father, the Cornet, when that restraint was not upon him, was, in reality, an agreeable young man, making no pretensions indeed to accomplishment, and evidently but little acquainted with men and the world, but open,

sincere, and gay—honourable in his feelings, and perfectly unaffected in his manners. Had Reginald not observed what passed at Mr Ward's villa, on the great day of the elopement, with acuteness sufficient to put him pretty much in possession of what the elder Macdonald's views had been, he certainly should have gathered no information as to that matter from the conversation of his son—but he met the Cornet frequently during the week which followed, and his good-humour on those occasions was too visible, to permit Reginald's harbouring any sort of suspicion, that he had sustained any sore disappointment in the abrupt evasion of the heiress of Grypherwast. On the contrary, there was a lightness about every thing he said and looked, that satisfied his acquaintance (perhaps it would not be going too far to call Reginald his friend,) that the Cornet was extremely well pleased to be delivered, by whatever accident, from the necessity of acting continually a part in which his heart had never been his prompter. Reginald saw all this, and certainly liked young Macdonald all the better for what he saw.

Rather more than a week had elapsed, and still neither Reginald nor Mr Ward had received any information about Sir Charles Catline—but negative evidence was, in such a case, quite as good as affirmative ; and they, both of them, considered it as beyond a doubt, that the dextrous Chisney, and the no less dextrous Barbara Catline, had received the blacksmith's blessing at Gretna-Green, long before the Baronet had been able to come up with them.

And such was the truth. The fugitives, having travelled day and night, and having taken special care to order their relays beforehand, were married at Gretna-Green ere Sir Charles had reached Kendal. They then struck into cross-roads ; and the Baronet, who, even after inspecting Vulcan's register, was anxious to continue his pursuit, soon found that their movements had been very skilfully perplexed, and that it was quite in vain to think of recovering the trace he had lost. In a word, he proceeded to Edinburgh—inserted in the newspapers a mysterious advertisement, earnestly requesting “ an immediate and friendly meeting ” with Chisney and his wife—wrote to

Mr Ralph Macdonald, not less earnestly, soliciting his presence in Edinburgh—and, taking lodgings at Portobello, awaited there in solitary anxiety the result of these two applications.

Reginald had not seen either of the Macdonalds for two or three days, when one morning he received a letter from Miss Hesketh, containing information which certainly very much surprised him. Ellen told him, that Mr Keith had, in some measure, recovered from the languid state into which he had sunk ; but that he had several days ago considered it his duty to resign altogether the pastoral charge, for which it was too evident he could no more expect to recover strength. * * * “ We were just considering,” said she, “ to what village in this neighbourhood we should retire, and I believe the end of it would have been our returning to our good friend Mrs Wilkinson’s, at Witham, when all our plans have been changed, in consequence of the arrival of Mr Keith’s friend, Mr Macdonald of Edinburgh. You know, my dear Dalton, that, from what Mr Keith had told us both, I had formed no very favourable idea of this gentleman.

Mr Keith thought he had behaved very unkindly, at least very unhandsomely, and I had taken up his feelings. But we have both of us great reason *now* to reproach ourselves for our rashness in judging. Mr Macdonald came quite unexpectedly—although he told us he had been some time in London, and prevented from visiting Oxford earlier, only in consequence of business he had to attend to in the House of Lords. Mr Keith received him at first rather distantly, and I believe I did the same; but indeed we may well be ashamed of ourselves. Never did any man behave in a more kind manner—I am really quite unable to express all that I feel—Mr Keith himself is not kinder. He has persuaded Mr Keith, that, now he is not tied in any way to Oxford, he will be far better in his own country than in any other; and has insisted we must both accompany him to Scotland, and spend this summer at his place in the Highlands. He has also taken occasion to hint to me, that, in case my dear uncle be taken from me, his wife will be too happy to have me under her own roof, and give me a mother's protection. Now, my dear Reginald, you know

very well how much I had thought of the Yorkshire plan ; but indeed Mr Macdonald is so very kind, that, if Mrs Macdonald be as much so, I believe I shall be persuaded. Mr Macdonald's manners are certainly rather unpolished ; but Mr Keith says he is quite the gentleman in birth and connexions ; so that, I suppose, it must be merely manner. At all events, he is my guardian, in case I have that great loss ; and who knows whether he may not some day have it in his power to benefit me in more ways than I can imagine.

“ In the mean time, Mr Keith has been wonderfully the better of his society. He spends almost the whole day here ; and they have so many old stories to talk about, that my uncle is quite cheerful and happy when they are together. If he continues to improve as much for another week, I should not be surprised if we were to begin our journey then—but I fear, my dear Reginald, there will be but little chance of their taking London on their way. At one time, Mr Keith talked of going down by sea, and I was in hopes that I might have seen you, if it had been but for one little hour—but Mr Macdonald thinks, and

I fear there is but too much reason for it, that a sea-voyage of that length would be a severer trial than the other way ; and I dare say the end of it will be, that we shall all go down to Scotland direct from Oxford by very easy stages. Mr Keith never mentions your name ; but I am very sure he loves you as much as ever he did, notwithstanding ; for he looked quite happy when he heard Mr Macdonald praising you yesterday evening—and I need not tell you what I felt *then*. Mr Macdonald says his son is in London, and is quite a friend of yours. I believe he is to get leave of absence from his regiment, and spend some months in Scotland this summer ; so, no doubt, I shall get acquainted with him too. I think you said you had once met with Mrs Macdonald. Pray let me hear all about her. I cannot wish her to be better or kinder than her husband ; but perhaps she may be a little politer, and I hope your letter will tell me that it is so.” * * *

Reginald met young Macdonald by accident on the street, in the course of the same day, and received from him another edition of almost every part of this intelligence. The Cornet did not

conceal that he was very little pleased with the arrangements his father had been making, in so far as they regarded himself. He was not to join the regiment in the Peninsula until next season ; but he had been anxious to spend the whole of the intervening time in England ; and altogether, Reginald easily gathered, that the prospect of being subjected again to the discipline of domestic life had no charms for his imagination. The young gentleman naturally made many inquiries concerning these future guests of his father ; and Reginald, in answering him, did his best endeavour not to betray any thing of the profound interest, without which he could not mention even their names.

In a few days more, the Cornet came to take leave of Reginald with a considerably dejected countenance, and to ask him if he had any commands for Oxford. Reginald had written to Miss Hesketh but the day before, and at all events, he should never have dreamed of making Macdonald the confidant of that correspondence. He therefore simply requested him to carry his best wishes to all the party in St Clement's, his father in-

cluded; and in case he might be detained for a day or two there, furnished him with introductions to some of his young friends in the University, and so they parted.

The more Reginald reflected on it, the more was he surprised with the sudden change which seemed to have taken place in the elder Macdonald's manner of conducting himself towards Mr Keith. He considered, however, that if Mr Macdonald had met with a severe disappointment as to a merely worldly scheme, that disappointment might have had the effects of a lesson even upon him. At all events, he could not but see that it was a far better thing for Ellen Hesketh to be placed under the protection of a respectable family, and, above all, of a respectable lady, (for such from his own slight opportunities of observation, but much more from the general strain of the young Cornet's conversation in regard to his domestic relations, he conceived Mrs Macdonald to be,) than to encounter the melancholy and secluded life of an English nunnery. On the whole, it was the style of his temperament to hope, and he turned from Ellen, and the perplexities of her present

fortunes, to dream of the dear, and perhaps (so he fondly imagined) the not very distant day, when he should be enabled to offer her, wherever she might be found, the consolation and protection of a love that could not change.

Ellen, meanwhile, was preparing for her long journey, with a heart divided between the sadness of parted love, the joy with which she could not but contemplate the amending health of her old guardian and friend, and that trepidation with which so young a female must needs look forward to being domesticated, how permanently she could not foresee, among a family of strangers. The first of these emotions might be, in some measure, tempered by the tone in which Reginald had been partly forcing himself to write to her about his own prospects, (for, indeed, whatever gayer hopes he at other times nourished, when he was writing to Ellen melancholy was always predominant in his bosom)—and in regard to the Macdonalds, the continued kindness—indeed the all but paternal kindness—with which old Ralph treated her on all occasions, was every day lessening her natural feelings of timidity.

The young Cornet arrived in Oxford on the day immediately preceding that which was to witness the commencement of their journey. Ellen could not help auguring more and more favourably of the mother, from what she saw of the modest and gentle manners of the son ; and, on the whole, there was greatly more of the agreeable than of the painful in the journey itself. They travelled, of necessity, but a few stages each day, and Mr Macdonald was at pains to manage it so that they generally spent the evening at some place where there were sights or recollections of interest. They saw, almost without departing from the direct line of their way, Blenheim and Woodstock, and Kenilworth and Warwick, and then proceeded through the rich and varied scenery of Derbyshire, to York. After reposing for one whole day in that famous city, they proceeded in the same leisurely manner through Durham and Northumberland ; and, having been about a fortnight on the road, reached Edinburgh in safety.

So far from being the worse of travelling, Mr Keith was greatly better when the journey termi-

nated than when it began. His spirits, indeed, had risen quite perceptibly from the moment they touched the soil of Scotland ; and he had been, above all things, delighted with finding that Ellen Hesketh admired some of the fine scenery of the coast with an enthusiasm scarcely inferior to his own. In *that* pride, Mr Ralph Macdonald appeared to sympathize very heartily ; but his enthusiasm broke out in a far superior strain when they caught the first glimpse of the noble capital itself. They had dined at Haddington, and Ralph had insisted on a second bottle, in honour of the approaching conclusion of the journey. He pointed to the distant castellated mass, visible against a rich and glowing horizon, and almost out-marmioned Mar-mion in his ecstasy. He shook Keith's hand, and said, " My dear old friend, this *is* such a pleasure," and then he pressed Ellen's, and whispered, in a tone at once solemn and affectionate,—
" My dear young lady, you'll find a home yonder—I'm sure you've had your share of wandering. It *is* time that you were at home."

" At home !" said Ellen, and checked herself with a sigh.

“ Ay, my bonnie lassie,” said Ralph ; “ and what for should ye no be at home ? Ye were born here, my dear, and so were we all—and home’s home, be it never so homely.”

“ Nay,” said Ellen, smiling, “ you are jesting with me now, Mr Macdonald ; for ’tis the most beautiful landscape—almost the most beautiful, certainly, that I ever saw.”

“ And only *almost*, my dear ? What is’t, then, that ye would prefer ? Nothing in Germany, I’m sure.”

“ Nay, indeed, sir—I am not quite so sure of that. But, I believe, you never were on the Continent ?”

“ Not I, i’faith, nor never mean to be, if I can help it, my dear Miss Hesketh ; and I hope you’ll never be on the Continent any more, neither.”

“ Why, after all,” says Mr Keith, “ Ellen never saw anything on the Continent so fine as the place she has left. Oxford beats the German towns clean, for that matter ; and I trow, Macdonald, Auld Reekie is before Oxford, any day of the year.”

“ Oxford ! my dear sir,” quoth Ralph, “ why, Oxford’s not a city at all, man—it’s just a wheen Colleges planted thick thegither, wi’ kirks, and leebraries, and observatories, and steeples, and what not—But as for a city, why, there’s not even the look o’ ane about it. Give me folk in a town, say I—I like the bustle and whirr o’ population about a city—What signifies a wheen tutors and laddies gaun stoiting about wi’ gowns and square trenchers?—Useless havers!—Na, na, Miss Ellen, my dear, you look down the now, and I see you doubt what I’m saying ; but ye shall see a city indeed, ere ye’re an hour aulder.—Oxford, indeed !”—

“ —And Oxford could have been nothing but a dull place for you, my dear,” he resumed, after a little pause—“ a very dull place, I’m sure, and noways suitable for a young leddy. No company—no diversion—clean out of the world—and that’s no the thing for ony young leddy, and, least of a’—but I manna meddle wi’ compliments, Miss Ellen—that’s no my trade—Oor day’s past for that, Mr Keith—We must leave that to the ri-

sing generation, my dear. If Tam, there, had a tongue in his head—but no matter, no matter.”

The old gentleman continued talking in this sort of strain until they were fairly in the city. Mr Keith, as they drove even through the old streets which first received them, could not refrain from exclaiming upon the wonderful improvements that had everywhere taken place since he was last in Edinburgh; but when they passed the Bridge, and the whole New Town burst upon their view, his astonishment was silent. Mr Macdonald sat eyeing him in silence too, but with a smile that was eloquent enough to express his calm and superior triumph.

The carriage stopped at the door of a very handsome house in Queen Street. “Are we at the end of our journey?” says Keith.

“Ay, indeed, are we,” says Ralph; “and I hope you’ll like your quarters none the worse, though I believe ye may have shot a snipe where my dining-table stands.” And with this he handed Miss Hesketh out of the carriage, bidding her welcome anew, with all the old Scotch ceremonial

of cordiality, so soon as he had conducted her beyond his threshold.

When Reginald Dalton was introduced to Mrs Macdonald at Thorwold-hall, the reader may remember that he was considerably surprised with the contrast which the elegance of that lady's appearance presented, to the rough exterior of her lord. Reginald had prepared Ellen Hesketh in so far, and yet even the expectations his account had excited were surpassed. She found herself welcomed not only graciously, but gracefully. Mrs Macdonald, in truth, received Ellen not a whit less kindly than if she had been some forlorn young kinswoman of her own ; and there was a ladylike softness about all her attentions, which could not fail to be very charming, more especially to one who had for so long a period been separated from any congenial society of her own sex.

There was a slight tinge of affectation about Mrs Macdonald. She was, or supposed herself to be, something of a literary character, and did not always conceal a certain contempt for her hus-

band's evident and avowed indifference, or rather perhaps scorn, in regard to all such matters as interested her imagination. Her son, too, sometimes shocked her a little by his want of sympathy in this style; yet it was evident that there could not be a more affectionate mother. The Cornet's return had been a thing she did not expect until but a few days before they arrived, and the presence of her only child was, of course, a delightful gratification to her. Mr Keith had been in some sort an old acquaintance—she seconded, with ready zeal, her husband's efforts to make the old gentleman feel at home beneath her roof. Ralph himself was happy in being restored to his own fireside, and in spite of a few occasional differences of opinion, he seemed to be fond of his wife, and delighted with every thing about him. Altogether, the party was a happy one, and, in spite of all its pensiveness, Ellen's gentle heart could not refuse to participate in the pleasure that sat on every countenance about her.

Mrs Macdonald, on her part, was half in love with Ellen ere the party broke up for the night. She conducted her to her bed-room, and lingered

with her there for some time. It was bright moonlight, and the noble Frith, and the beautiful outline of the coast of Fife, were visible quite distinctly from the windows of this apartment. Mrs Macdonald pointed to the distant hills over the sea, and told Ellen that it was *there* she had been born, and then talked of her mother, of whom it seemed she had seen a little, although she had been absent from St Andrews during the months that immediately preceded her death. “And, indeed, my dear,” said she, “you are as like what she was then as is possible, only the dress was so different in those days, and your mother’s sweet face was a more melancholy one than I trust you will ever wear.”

Ellen sighed at the mention of that sad mystery, and looked wistfully in the kind lady’s face.

“I see what you mean, my dear,” said she.—“But indeed I know nothing more of the matter than yourself. I never saw Mr Hesketh—he was gone from St Andrews ere I became acquainted with your mother, and Mr Macdonald has told me as little as any one else, I believe, about the matter. Perhaps he himself knows not much of it.

If he does, I am sure he must have made some promise which it is impossible he should ever break."

"I do not desire to know anything of it," said Ellen, and her pale lip trembled as she said the words. "How can I desire to know anything of such a man—such a parent? My dear Mrs Macdonald, I would rather be an orphan as I am, than find such a father;—and yet sometimes I cannot but think that one day or other—I have a presentiment, a fear I should say—but I'm foolish to say this, and you are too kind."

"Nay, my love," said Mrs Macdonald, "you must not speak about kindness. God knows, I have often wished, when I heard of all Mr Keith's wanderings, that Mr Macdonald had taken you home to our house from the beginning. But we must not play sad now, my dear. I hope you will be happy here."

"I am sure I shall," said Ellen. "If I be not, the fault must be my own."

"'Tis well you have been used to a quiet life, my dear Miss Hesketh, for I fear you will have rather a dull one, at least, in the summer time,

with us. Here, to be sure, there is no want of company, but we go to Glenstroan in a few weeks, and there we are twenty miles, and a ferry besides, from our nearest neighbour ; and poor Tom, I suppose they'll scarcely allow him to go with us. We shall be a very quiet circle, I promise you, from July to November."

" So much the better," says Ellen. " Only think of what I have been accustomed to."

" Well, well, my dear, we shall always have our books and our walks, you know ; and, in the mean time, do you get into bed and take a good sleep, for you've had a very long journey." With this Mrs Macdonald kissed Ellen very tenderly, and they parted.

CHAPTER II.

MR KEITH was visited, immediately after his arrival in Edinburgh, by several old acquaintances, in whose society he passed great part of his time during the two or three ensuing weeks. His infirmities not permitting him to walk abroad, he generally received his friends in his apartment at Mr Macdonald's ; and his host was continually making parties, expressly for the purpose of amusing and gratifying the old invalid. Ellen, in the meantime, continued to be treated in the kindest possible manner by Mrs Macdonald ; and such is the gentle courage of an innocent female heart, that, in spite of the secret griefs which sometimes overpowered her when she was left alone, she was able, in the presence of that lady, and among the friendly and cheerful circle that surrounded her, to wear the aspect, not only of resignation and composure, but even of a sober happiness, and a quiet gaiety.

The young Cornet had no occupation of business, and as but few idle young people remain in Edinburgh at that season of the year, he might perhaps have found his mode of life a little tedious, had the domestic circle received no reinforcement. But the fair Ellen was here, and she was a stranger, and upon him naturally devolved the duty of making her acquainted with the different objects of interest in the city and its neighbourhood. Mrs Macdonald accompanied him and Ellen in many of their walks ; but these were not unfrequently extended to distances rather unsuitable for an elderly lady's exertions. Ellen, light and active, thought nothing of climbing Arthur's Seat. Braid, Corstorphine hill, the sea-shore, were all of them easily within her reach, and all of them became favourites. In short, scarcely a day passed but she and her unfailing squire spent several hours together in this way ; and to say truth, although she was introduced to abundance of young gentlemen, and found no lack of attention among them, there was a certain modesty and simplicity about Tom Macdonald that pleased her far better than any thing she met with

elsewhere. He was naturally bashful, and the brief experience he had made of English life had been quite insufficient to cure him of this. On the whole, therefore, he was one of that class of very young men, who find it an extremely difficult thing to make acquaintance with very young women. But every thing has its counterpoise in these matters; and the more slow he was in gaining any such intimacy, the more delightful, of course, it was when gained; and this was one which it was impossible he should have avoided gaining. During a fortnight they had been fellow-travellers; and now they were living under the same roof, members of the same family, and the only young members of it too. Ellen, her serious affections engaged far away, behaved to him with a degree of easy frankness, which perhaps no young lady, whose heart was entirely in her own keeping, would have ventured to assume upon so brief an acquaintance. In truth, his first shyness had made her consider him, rather more than she might otherwise have done, as a boy, and this, too, might have diminished her reserve; while he, on the other hand, knowing but little of

man, and less of woman, never thought of speculating upon Ellen's behaviour to him, or scrutinizing into the motives of its freedom ; but gave himself up with the open ardour of a young and unpractised bosom, to enjoy what must have been abundantly charming to any one, but what all the circumstances of his temper and situation conspired to invest with double fascinations for him. Of the mystery which hung over Ellen's earlier history, the Cornet had received some hints from his mother ; and this, it need not be said, added a certain romantic depth to the interest with which he regarded her—but why talk of romantic interest?—Nature alone had been enough. Ellen Hesketh was young—even had she not been beautiful, she was young, innocent, affectionate, and modest ; and where is the unsophisticated stripling that could have resisted all these charms, even had beauty, and the overwhelming charm of beauty, been wanting ?

But she *was* beautiful—exquisitely beautiful—the radiance of virgin glee had been chastened, not eclipsed, within her dark, rich, downcast eyes—her cheek had not the steady bloom of rejoicing

and dancing blood, the ensign of unchastised mirth, the flush and exuberant voluptuousness of a heart lapt in ease—but its paleness had nothing of the cold about it ;—the blush that durst not rest there hovered within view, and now and then mantled for a moment with a rosy gleam, that which even in marble whiteness had been lovely.—Young Macdonald had, in obedience to his father, tried to make love, and he had even tried to feel it ;—but to love—unbidden, unsuggested, unprompted, unconscious love—the pure true passion that lives and dreams—he had been a stranger. Perhaps he would not have fallen in love even with Ellen Hesketh, had it not been his fortune to find himself domesticated under the same roof with her. People talk of balls, routs, operas, and gay parties—but these, after all, are not the true scenes. One goes to these warned, prepared, armed. Your guerilla warfare is the true strategy of love—and one calm glance, or one confidential whisper, at the fire-side, is worth all the radiant smiles, and all the no-meaning whispers of fifty saloons.—Hannah More preaches against play-going and waltzing ; but Mrs Coelebs is a knowing lady, and

must be quite aware, that young hearts encounter far more danger in the course of a single quiet stroll in the fields, in a fine summer's evening, than ever haunted the crowded and glowing atmosphere of theatre or ball-room. Indeed, I remember no love worth the mentioning, that began under these last auspices, except only that of Romeo and Juliet—and there, be it remembered, they were both of them, not young people, but children; and the girl, if we may judge from what we are permitted to see of her nurse, one that had been accustomed to a very improper style of conversation. And after all, even *they* wore masks, and flirted in a corner, and knew they were doing wrong.

CHAPTER III.

THE Cornet loved Ellen—and he at last knew that he loved her ; but he was withheld, by a thousand scruples, from venturing to declare the passion which had taken possession of his open and artless bosom. The behaviour of Ellen herself perplexed him. She was so kind, that the one moment he almost persuaded himself her heart was disposed to respond to the movements of his. She was so frank and so calm, that the next instant he dreaded the notion of destroying, by rashness, the delightful species of intercourse of which he was already in possession.

But perhaps his father perplexed him as much—in a very different way to be sure—as Miss Hesketh herself. The old gentleman's conduct towards the young lady was such a mixture of affection and respectfulness—he seemed to watch

her looks with an eye of such gentle deference—and over every thing he said and did when in her presence, there was diffused such an unwonted blandness of courtesy and gallantry, that the Cornet could not help imagining it was impossible his father should think otherwise than favourably of an alliance with one who carried about her a charm capable of producing so uncommon a change on his whole aspect and demeanour. Before her, it seemed as if the coarser elements of his nature were rebuked into slumber—his brow had dismissed its furrows—the craft had fled from his eye—sincerity was in every smile and in every tone of his voice. Yet, when the young man retraced to himself the history of his recent expedition to London—when he recollected with what cold, determined calculation his father had urged him to woo Miss Catline—with what persevering diligence he had stimulated, goaded him in every stage of a pursuit, of which, from the beginning, he had avowed his dislike—above all, with what dark and sullen ire his behaviour had been marked at the moment when that pursuit was at once cut short, and baffled, and disappointed ;—when

he thought of all this, and indeed of almost everything that he had ever had occasion to see and to know of his father's character and opinions, how could he help regarding it as at least a very possible thing that the old man might consider Ellen Hesketh as a most charming young lady, and yet hear with the most implacable scorn of his son's forming such a connexion with one, who could bring with her no advantages either to his fortune or his ambition ?

Between these hopes and fears the young soldier hesitated long. In the mean time, his own behaviour towards Ellen was involuntarily becoming every day more and more unlike what it had used to be. The habit of their walking out together had been so completely formed, that it could scarcely have been interrupted now, without exciting attention and inquiry ; and, at any rate, while he could not look forward to being alone with Ellen without a certain sort of tremour, to lose that, when the moment came, would have been pain intolerable. They did, therefore, as usual, continue to be for hours together every day, but the Cornet walked silent, or absent, be-

side Ellen—sometimes a confession trembling on his lips, and then the blood driven back chill to his heart again, by some look or smile of hers, that he could not avoid considering as the index of a bosom by far too sadly placid, to be sympathizing with his own. Once or twice he had worked himself up to the point, and was just ready to say something that could never have been unsaid, when the calmness and serenity of her pensive countenance met his full gaze, and unnerved it. He shrunk into himself, and trembled to think how near he had been to the precipice; and yet that indescribable fascination drew him back again and again—and at last the hour came, and it could be resisted no longer.

They had walked side by side towards the coast, and were sitting together upon the rocks in a very solitary situation, not far from Carline Park. The day was a fair and still one, but the sky was cloudy, and every now and then a heavy breath of wind came from the sea, and made melancholy music, for an instant, among the branches of the old elms behind them. The sea was calm, but the atmosphere seemed to press upon it,

and it lay divided into broad lines, alternately dark and gleaming. The opposite coast of Fife appeared nearer than it really was, the hills larger and gloomier than Ellen had ever seen them. The poor girl had received a long, and rather doleful letter, from Reginald Dalton, the same morning; and while Macdonald sat gazing by starts upon her, and then stooping down and playing with the pebbles, she, her cheek resting on her hand, kept her eyes fixed with a sad and dreaming seriousness, upon the melancholy waste of waters before her. Quite abruptly, her companion laid his hand upon hers, and said, "Ellen, what are you thinking of?"

He had never been used to call her by her name so, and she was a little surprised; and, conscious of what her thoughts had been, she blushed without making any answer.

The young man saw her blush, and he dared to hope; and, without giving himself time to ponder any more, broke out at once with a declaration so passionate, and yet so modest, that she could not hear it without the deepest affliction. The truth flashed upon her—she, guarded her-

self, had never thought of love and him together ; and the style of her behaviour to him had been such as no young woman, whose affections were engaged, ought to have adopted towards so young and so inexperienced a man. He had been mistaken—the fault was partly hers—a tear sprung into her eye, and she could not withdraw the hand which he had taken.

She remained in perfect silence—the blush had deserted her cheek—she met his eye, his ardent, bashful, anxious eye—the tears gushed from hers—she stooped, and the drops fell upon his hand.

He began to speak again—but ere he had said two words, she struggled herself into composure, and rose from beside him. “ My dear Mr Macdonald,” said she, “ you cannot know what grief you have filled my heart with. This is no time for coquetries—I feel your too great kindness—I blush to think of your goodness—all that I can do I will do, and that is to be honest. I am grateful, most grateful—but we must both forget what has been said here—I am not mistress of myself, and yet it would be a sin if I hesitated to tell you

the whole truth of it—I have—I have an engagement.”

Macdonald sprung to his feet, and said, “Miss Hesketh, I have done you wrong. I had no right to extort this from you.—Can you forgive my rashness?”

“Talk not of forgiveness, my dear Mr Macdonald. Can you forgive me?—Oh, sir, we are not to give over being friends?”

“Friends! Miss Hesketh. You are engaged to be married? Good God! What right have I to speak to you? Good God! I have given you pain.”

“I have given *you* pain, Mr Macdonald—let me give you no more. You are a gentleman, and you have my secret—I know ’tis safe with you. Let us not say a word more about that—we are friends. My heart cannot refuse to be touched with the high compliment you have paid me.—Love is not mine to give you.—Be assured that you shall ever have in me a friend, if you will let me say the word—a sister.”

Macdonald had been quite thrown out by the first shock of that which Ellen’s candour prompt-

ed her to reveal to him so abruptly.—The young man stared and stammered for a few seconds, not apparently understanding what Ellen was saying to him ; but he met once more her eye fixed upon him seriously, kindly, modestly—and he made a bold effort, and was himself—more than himself.—“ Miss Hesketh,” said he, taking the young lady’s hand again, “ I can scarcely expect that you should just at this moment give me credit when I tell you so—and yet it is true—yes, Ma’am, I am perfectly calm—you see in me your friend, your brother—all that, dear Ellen, and no more——. Convince me that you believe what I say—convince me that my folly *is* forgiven and forgotten—make a friend of me, indeed—tell me how I can serve you, or——”

Ellen sighed, and cast down her eyes.

“ ——You,” he proceeded,—“ or the happiest man in the world—one that I doubt not deserves to be so, since he is your choice.”

“ Mr Macdonald, you overpower me—pity me, Mr Macdonald—I am the most unhappy creature in the world——”

“ Unhappy ?—Ellen unhappy ?—I have no right to say so—but once more, *can* I serve you ?”

“ You are too good, too kind, too generous—all the world is too good to me—and yet, wherever I go I am the cause of pain—oh, Mr Macdonald, let us return to town—let us be calm—let us be silent.”—

He drew her arm within his, and they began walking—after a pause of some minutes, the Cornet stopped again, and said, looking Ellen in the face with an air of sincere and manly humility,—“ I know you do me justice, more than justice—I know that you will never dream of any thing unworthy—I know that you will never suspect me of asking questions from curiosity—I know that you love, and I see that you are here alone and unhappy—Is there any thing I can do for you ?—Can I say any thing for you ?—Can I remove, or help to remove, any difficulties ?—To see you happy would be happiness for me—”

Ellen gazed upon the boy again. She blushed, and then the blood rushed from her very lips—she gently returned the pressure of his hand, and

tried, but tried in vain, to say a single word in answer.

“ My dearest Miss Hesketh,” said he, “ you know not what I suffer—It is all my doing, and yet yours is the pain—Believe me, I have washed my heart—I should hear your lover’s name with no feeling except the desire of knowing him, that for your sake and for his own I might love him—and, perhaps, young as I am, I may have something in my power—”

Ellen shook her head, and then forcing a melancholy enough smile, said, “ My dear friend, be assured that if I had a favour to ask, it should be of you I would ask it—but I cannot just now tell you so long a story and so sad a one. Hereafter the time may come—”

“ The time may come ?—nay, my dear Ellen, the time must come ; that is, if you meant to speak of the time when you are to be happy—”

Ellen looked to the sea, and murmured something—“ Unfortunate, say you ?—How unfortunate ?”—

“ Every way, every way.”—

“ Nay, but you whispered that I knew him ?”

“ Yes, I did. O, Mr Macdonald, will you force me to do this ?—And yet, what is the reason why I should hesitate with you ? God knows, I feel that I can never make sufficient atonement. The young man I mentioned is unfortunate here, and is going abroad. Perhaps the world may look more kindly upon him, poor fellow—”

“ Dalton ?” said Macdonald, in a whisper.

Ellen nodded gravely, and then, feeling her face burn, turned it away from him towards the sea.

Involuntarily perhaps they both quickened their pace ; but it was a long while ere any more words passed between them. Ellen at last made an exertion, and said something about the view of Edinburgh which was just opening upon them. Tom answered quite wide of the mark, and then, perceiving he had done so, coloured and bit his lip. “ It is in vain,” said he, after a moment, “ it is quite in vain, Miss Hesketh—I cannot listen even to you—I know Mr Dalton—I think I may say that I know him—I know his misfortunes too—I know that a miserable series of accidents have conspired to deprive him of what should have

been his. O, Miss Hesketh, I could tell you such a story ; for I dare say even he does not know all the work that has been carried on.— But this is not the time, nor, if it were, would it be of any use. I know Dalton—I respect him—I love him—I loved him before and *now*—but I must restrain myself. From all that I have heard, he is likely to succeed very well in India. Would to God he could have staid, but that is impossible.”—

“ My dear Mr Macdonald,” said Ellen, “ we are all very young, and let us hope that good days are before us all yet.”

“ I pray God you may be happy together,” said Macdonald, very solemnly ; “ that is—that shall be—both my hope and my prayer. You can’t go—you don’t think of going to India ?”

“ No, no,” said Ellen, faintly smiling, “ we are not quite come to that yet. But, my dear Mr Macdonald, you have now heard the whole of my story. Be assured I feel in the most sensible manner the deep and sincere kindness that made you wish to hear it ; but you now *must* see, that what I have said was said only because I could not

think of leaving anything unsaid that you wished to hear—you must see that no good can come of our returning again to the subject—and I am sure you will not do so.”—

“ If you find at any time that I have anything in my power, you *will* apply to me—you will gratify me by treating me as a true friend?”

“ I will,” said Ellen, fervently. “ I give you my word I will.”

“ Enough,” said Macdonald—and this was the last of their conversation. They continued to walk at a rapid pace until they reached Queen-Street, each doubtless having thoughts enough, though they were perhaps more fitted to lengthen than to beguile the way. They entered Mr Macdonald’s together ; and at the door of the drawing-room the Cornet and Ellen shook hands and parted. Tom met his father coming down stairs the next instant, and the old gentleman clapped him on the shoulder with an air of more than common benignity, saying, “ Come, come, Tom, you and Ellen maun learn to keep better hours wi’ your walks—but never heed, never heed—come your

ways down again directly, and I'll tell them to be dishing the dinner."

"I had no idea it was so late," said Tom, looking at his watch with an air of some confusion.

"Hoots, hoots, never fash your thumb, Tom; it's a' weel that ends weel—and we're to be a' by ourselves, for the Priest, he's out at his dinner."—

CHAPTER IV.

THE Cornet's mind was in such a state of agitation, that he would most gladly have been allowed to remain for a while by himself, to cool and compose him ; but the dinner-bell rung almost immediately, and he had barely time to dip his face and hands in cold water, ere he was obliged to join the party below. This, as we have seen, consisted only of Ellen, and his father and mother—but, in some cases, there is nothing so trying as a very small company, and certainly the poor Cornet's was one of these. However, he tried to make the best of it ; and although his nerves had undergone a shake, which prevented him from making any thing like his usual figure with the knife and fork, it so happened that Miss Hesketh's deficiency of appetite was at least as remarkable, and that attracted so much both of

Mr Macdonald's attention and his wife's, that Tom found means to escape almost entirely without notice.

The ladies had no sooner retired than Mr Macdonald said to his son, "Come, Tam, it's but seldom we twa are left by ourselves now-a-days—there's twa three little matters I would fain have some crack wi' you about—and ye may e'en take the key, and bring up a bottle of whatever ye like best—we'll maybe hae a health or twa that it will be but decent to drink in claret.—E'en take the third binn on the left hand, Tam."

The Cornet obeyed, and when he returned to the dining-room with the magnum, found his father established in his easy chair, in an attitude of more than common luxury. The old gentleman filled both glasses to the brim, and nodding with a very knowing look, drained his own to the last drop. He then sat rubbing his hand upon his leg for a minute or two, and at last filled himself another bumper, saying, "That's true, Tam, lad, we had forgotten our manners—The Ladies !"

Tom accepted the pledge in some confusion—indeed, for the last two hours, his complexion had been continually changing, in a style quite unusual with him—all which, however he had concealed his observation, had, in reality, by no means escaped the perspicacious optics of Glenstroan.

“She’s a charming young woman, isn’t she, Tam?” quoth the senior.

“Who, father? I beg your pardon——”

Glenstroan drew his hand over his lips, as if to conceal a smile that had rather prematurely mantled them—coughed once or twice through his fingers, and whispered, “Na, na, Tam, ye’re a perfect fox turned—Wha *could* I be speaking of?”

“Father!”—said the Cornet, staring at him.

“Son!”—he answered, with a grin that discovered all the teeth still in his possession.—Tom’s blush deepened and spread, beneath the steady gaze to which he felt himself exposed.

“My dear Thomas,” said the old man, suddenly assuming an expression of more sober be-

nignity, "It's high time that we should gie ower a' this wark—I see, and have seen, more than enough for my turn. Miss Hesketh is a lovely creature, Tom—she is indeed a sweet lassie, and as modest as she's bonny. After all, it must be conceded, that Miss Catline was nothing till her."

Tom smiled, in spite of himself, at hearing his father disparage the so recent object of all his adulations and commendations. The crafty senior read his thoughts in a moment, and gulped a bumper. "Tam Macdonald," quoth he, setting down the glass with rather a solemn air—"Tam Macdonald, I see what's been passing within you. Answer me one thing, my boy—do you think I love you?"

"Can I doubt it, father?—How can you ask such a question?"

"And how could you look such a look, Tam?—But come, come, what signifies palavering. If ye ever doubted what my motive was, ye'll do me justice belive. In the mean time, Tam, I have had a deal of distress lately about a friend of mine—I need not mention names—but I just

wanted to let you hear the story, and to hear what you would say about it. Ye have a great share o' common sense, my dear lad, and I really just wish to have your opinion."

"Indeed, father," said the Cornet, "I fear you are paying me compliments I don't deserve. You know very well that I am no judge about matters of business."

"Na, na, Tam—there's to be nae talk o' compliments atween us—but, to tell you the truth, 'tis no quite a matter of business neither, but rather just a point for common human discretion, and sagacity, and sound feeling. I'm going to tell you a plain story, Tam, and I expect no more than I'm very sure ye *can* gie me—a plain comment. The story," he proceeded, "is very shortly this:—A friend of mine, a gentleman, a man of family, and now at least of some fortune too, had occasion, a great many years ago, to be of great use to an English gentleman, of some rank and distinction, in a very delicate matter—a most extremely delicate affair, as can well be imagined. Well, things go on, and it turns out,

that, in course of time, the Englishman has it in his power to return the obligation, without in the smallest degree injuring, or even inconveniencing, himself. The thing is proposed, sir—proposed and agreed to, and every thing goes on as smoothly as possible for a time; but just when my friend is considering the matter as perfectly fixed and settled, he discovers that he has been played with, sir—most treacherously played with. His friend—his seeming and professing friend—is a scoundrel—a base, infamous, cunning rascal—he has been deceiving him all along—the whole plan is blown up at once, and he has nothing but a few fair speeches given him, by way of amends.—What think you of this conduct, Tom? Speak—tell me what you think of it.”

“ I think very badly of it indeed, sir,” says the Cornet; “ but you have told the story so generally, that I confess I am not able to see more than what lies on the very surface. You say there was treachery—how can treachery be any thing but bad?”

“ Right, Tom—I see you have the proper

feeling about you, man. How can any man hold up his face to defend a long ravelled web of cunning, treacherous dissimulation, and ingratitude?"

"Nobody, surely, father—nobody but one that would do the like himself, if he had the temptation and the opportunity."

"Right again, Tam—quite right, my dear boy. I see we go together in every point—but what's my friend to do?—What is he to do, Tam?"

"Nay, nay, father—that's a question which I cannot answer indeed. I don't know any thing of the nature of the provocation—nothing more, I mean, than what is quite loose and general—it must depend entirely upon the circumstances, whether he should call him out or no."

"Call him out or no?—hoots, hoots, Mister Cornet o' the Blues—There's nothing o' calling out here, I promise ye.—My friend's an elderly man, head of a family, elder of the kirk—a man considered in society, Tam—a person quite out of the way of such hawering ploys."

"Nay, then—I suppose he must just consider

with himself, whether he has or has not proper grounds for an action of damages—and whether, if he has, it is or is not worth his while, and suitable to his character, to take advantage of them. Every thing, father, must depend upon the particular nature of the case. It is quite impossible, that your friend should not be the best judge in such an affair for himself.”

“ Ay, Tam—and it’s even so, man. My friend *is* the best judge of his own affair—and he *has* judged—and he has come to a very proper judgment.”

“ Then why consult other people, father ?”

“ Ha, ha, Tam—an’ ye might say that, if this were a world where a man could always do his own turn wi’ his own fingers—but ’tis not so, Tam—we’re a’ linked thegither—we must stand or fa’ wi’ our friends. In many situations, the best single arm is nothing—ay, and the best single head is nothing too—do you follow me ?”

“ Your friend wants assistance—I’m sure, father, if ’tis any thing that I can do for him, *you* need not have hesitated to vouch for me. Can I

be of any use to your friend?—I beg you would make no words, but just tell me at once what I can do?”

“Na, na—we’re ower fast now, Tam Macdonald.—But come, come, fill your glass again, Tam—I believe the best way will be to speak plain at once—Tam Macdonald, I am your father——”

“Oh, sir, why do you look so?—There has nothing happened to *you*?”

“Tam Macdonald, I am your father—you are my only son—my only child—we have sometimes had our little word of difference; but I think I may say, that we have been father and son all our time——”

“My dear father, you distress me——”

“Come, now, Tam, listen to what I am saying—you’re my good boy, and I know what I have to trust to. You know very well, Tam, that I began the world poorly enough; you know that I have laboured, and that I have thriven; and you know very well that I value all I have, only because I have you to look forward to—I have not been slaving for myself, Tam.”

“ You are too good, sir. Indeed, father, you are distressing me—you are strong and healthy—you have laboured, and you have a right to repose and enjoyment, and you will have a very long time of them both.”

“ You’re my ain dear callant—but oh, Tam, ye canna ken what a father’s heart is—ye’ll ken that, too, in your time, and then ye’ll think of me. But to the business.—Tam, I am your father, and I have been injured.”

“ You, father?—*you* injured?—What? how?—Who is it?—Name the man!”

“ Softly, softly, Tam—we must take things gently—*suaviter in modo—fortiter in re*——”

“ But speak, tell me what I can do? It was of yourself you were speaking all this while. Who is this scoundrel that has deceived you? Can I do any thing?—Heavens, father——”

“ Wheest, wheest—hoolie and fairly, Tam Macdonald. The story is just this—Your father has been cruelly abused—Will you assist him?”

“ Will I assist him!”

“ Ay, will you shew yourself to be a son indeed ?”

“ Do I not owe you my existence, my life, my blood, every thing ?”

“ Will you assist your father in his *revenge* ?” said the old man, half rising in his seat.

“ Speak,” says the son—“ command me—I am yours—all yours.”

“ And will nothing draw you from my side, Tom ?—May I depend upon you indeed ?”

“ As the heart on the arm—as the arm on the sword.”

“ Enough, my boy ; and so far for me. It will not change the matter for the worse for me, nor for the better to him, that *you* have been ill used—ay, you yourself—you as well as your father.”

“ *Me* ill used ?—Heavens, father, I cannot understand you ! Surely there has been enough of this mystery. Tell me the truth at once. If I *am* to hear it——”

“ You shall hear it. Thomas Macdonald, we have both been abused—there is a glorious revenge within our reach—you *can* do the thing.”

“ Heavens, father, do you doubt me ?—Do

you think I shall hesitate?—Do you think so poorly of me, as to suppose that I shall shrink from any danger?”

“ Danger?—But I see how it is—ye’re dreaming about your duelling again. Shall I never convince you, that this is a serious business, and none of your *rows*, you fool!—None of your silly squabbles among boys, that boys are so ready to shed their bluid upon? Come, Tom, I have laid aside the father. I am treating you as one friend treats another. You are a man, and I beg you to think, and speak, ay, and *act* like a man.”

“ Try me—I am ready.”

“ And so am I,” quoth the senior, “ and so is every thing. Can you guess the name of the man that I hate?”

“ Me? how? how should I?”

“ How should you? how should you *not*?—Who is it that has injured you and me?”

“ Who, father?—Who is it?—Can I divine?”

“ Divine?—Come, come, you’re playing with your father, boy. You know what has happened—you know how Sir Charles——”

“ Sir Charles ?—Sir Charles Catline ?”

“ Ay, Sir Charles Catline,” whispered Glenstroan—“ if you have heard of such a gentleman.”

“ And he ?—Indeed, father, I am altogether in the dark. Do you allude to the late affair ?—If so, I beg you will not do so again. I thought you had agreed with me, that, after all, it was not *his* fault ; nay, I thought you had even agreed with me in something more than that.”

“ You’re a hasty callant, Tam—ye do not know what you’re speaking about. I told you, long ago I told you, that I had served Sir Charles Catline—that, but for me, he had long ago been a gone man, clean gone—that it was agreed between us, you should be married to his daughter—and you do not need me to put ye in mind o’ the upshot.”

“ Come, father, since you *have* spoken again upon a subject, of which I had hoped to hear no more, it is my part to speak my mind too about it ; and I trust this will be the last time it will ever be alluded to by either the one or the other of us. I never loved Miss Catline—I rejoice

that she did not take me—I consider the moment when she made her elopement, as the most fortunate one in my life.—I see that you are angry with me, father, and I am most sorry for it ; but if you remember, you spoke to me *once* as if you had looked at all that matter in the same way with myself.”

“ Me look in the same way with yourself?” says Macdonald, half whistling with indignation —“ *Me* look at all that matter like you, Cornet Thomas?—My word, you’re no blate to say so, however, young man.”

“ I entreat your pardon, father. God knows, I said but what I thought. I had mistaken you, I find ; but, at any rate, what signifies this now ? —The affair is over—past and gone ; and for God’s sake, let it be buried. If you would oblige me seriously, let it be buried and forgotten.”

“ You know not what you’re speaking of. It *does* signify now—the affair is *not* over—it is *not* past and gone—and it shall *not* be buried—and that shall *not* be forgotten, which never *can* be forgiven.”

“ Good God, father, I cannot understand your heat !”

“ You can’t ?” says the old man—“ you can’t ? —Thomas Macdonald,” he proceeded, after pausing for a minute, “ I believe I have been putting the cart before the horse, my lad—I believe I have trusted too much to generals.—Are you calm enough to listen to the real particulars of a story that I have never told to any mortal yet, and which nothing but the most deadly provocation could have induced me to unfold even to you ?”

“ I am perfectly calm, father, and I hope I have not been otherwise. I beg you to begin at once.”

“ Yes, Tom, I may begin the matter ; but, ere I do so, I give you fair warning, it is you that must end it. I take it for granted, you know little or nothing of Sir Charles Catline’s early history——”

“ I know nothing of any part of his history, except what I have heard from yourself.”

“ Then you know nothing at all of it—for, two months ago, I was the last man that would have

trusted myself to say one word to the purpose about him.—You must know that he has been a rascal all his days. The truth of it has but lately flashed upon me. I was deceived in so far, like the rest of the world ; but now I understand him, and I believe the world will do that too, ere long be.

“ The first time I saw him,” he proceeded, “ was in the Ninety—I could tell you the very day, if I had my book here ; but, however, it was about the end of August, or beginning of September, in that year. He was a gay young man then, and he had come down to Scotland on a very shameful expedition with an innocent young woman, whom he had inveigled away from her friends. He found that it was absolutely necessary to please her with something in the shape of a wedding, and he came to me to arrange the thing—and what could I say, Tom ?—Arrange it I did. I told him how the law stood in this country, and I made the lady understand that also ; and, not to waste words, Tom, they exchanged writings in my presence, and were as well married ere next morning as if they had been three Sun-

days cried in the High Kirk. So far well—But what was the upshot? Why, you must know that all this time Catline was poorly enough off as to the pocket, and his chief expectations rested on an old uncle, an Admiral, a Sir William Catline, whose title he behoved to inherit; but as to the land and money, they were the old man's, to do whatever he liked with them. The auld body was in a failing way, and Catline had reason to be afraid he was surrounded with some gay designing chields; and, besides, he had other affairs to look after, so he made a run (that was all he said it was to be) up to England, leaving the lassie at St Andrews, in some sort under my management. Your mother saw her once or twice, but that was all; for, as it happened, that was the year your grandmother died, and she was a great deal more at Aberdeen, looking after and attending on her in her illness, than wi' me. But that's nothing to the story—I need not trouble you nor myself with all the circumbendibuses of it; but, in short, Catline staid away week after week, and month after month, and at last the Admiral dies, and he finds himself cut off with nothing but his baronetship,

which he could not keep from him, and Little Pyesworth, that you saw last year, with a farm or two about the house—a perfect trifle, nothing at all either to what he had been expecting, or indeed to the rank which he behoved to keep up. The will was a' right and tight, however—de'il a flaw to stick a thumb and a finger through, and something must be done.

“ He was young and handsome, and there was at least one way that the very matter of the title might have been of use to him, but for the Scotch wedding—that was the rub, Tom. His hands were tied up, but nobody knew of that in England; and, foul fa' him, it fell into his fancy that he might have the art to get over the difficulty—persuade the poor lassie he had carried away to keep herself quiet, and be contented to let him try his fortune with some English heiress. He wrote to me upon that subject—very darkly and cunningly, you may well believe—but still the drift was plain enough. I saw what he was after—I saw clearly what devilish imaginations he had got into.”

“ Scoundrel, indeed !” cries Thomas. “ O, fa-

ther, how could you know all this, and yet make this man your friend?"

"My friend?—hold your tongue, callant, and you shall hear what sort of a friend he has been. I would neither meddle nor make in the matter. I wrote him, telling him what I thought of his plans, and rebuking him, as ye may guess, pretty tightly; but I would never say one word, as he had visibly wished me to do, to the poor young woman. He, however, went on in his own way—he continued in England—sent a little money down now and then, but wrote seldomer and seldomer, until at last the lady became quite broken-hearted wi' his behaviour; and, to make bad worse, he had not been long away ere the unfortunate young creature found herself with bairn, and she was sickly and pining, and every day more so;—and what could I do, Tom? I had promised to keep their secret, and unless she at least had released me on that head, what could I do?"

"And she would not?"

"Not she, not she—her spirit was high, in spite of all her distress. I believe she would not

have cared a straw for anything that could happen her, if she had only had the least inkling that he really wished to be quit of her—and the end shewed that, I trow.”

“ She died ? ”

“ Ay, Tom, she died. I was not in St Andrews at the time.”

“ St Andrews ? ”

“ Ay, St Andrews, to be sure—where should it have been ? You know well enough we lived in St Andrews in these days. I was away on some business, however, and when I came back, it was all over. She had gone to visit in a friend’s house, and I believe—for indeed I never could be quite sure of it—but I believe she had happened to see some paragraph in a paper about a report of a marriage between Catline and a rich lady in the North of England. There *was* such a paragraph in the papers about that time, however, and I know that it was reading the papers she was taken ill—she was seized with the pains some weeks afore the time ; and, in short, Thomas, the poor thing had a very ill turn of it, and she was brought-

to-bed, and died in the course of a few hours afterwards—a melancholy story, Tom !”

“ Melancholy, indeed, father. But answer me one question—something has been gleaming upon me—Did she go by her right name in St Andrews ?”

“ I was just coming to that, man—not she.”

“ It was Hesketh,” cries Tom.—“ I see it all !”

“ Even so,” says Macdonald. “ And now I suppose you begin to have a little insight.”

“ Ellen Hesketh’s mother !—Good Heavens ! she is Catline’s child.—O, father, what a mystery has been here !”

“ A mystery ca’ ye’t ?—My word, it s been a mystery !”

“ And how is it Miss Hesketh has been left all her life with Mr Keith ?”

“ Why, just because it was the best I could make of it, Tom.—Keith, and his sister Mrs Gordon, were living at that time in St Andrews—Mrs Hesketh—Mrs Catline, I should say, was of their religion, and I had introduced the priest to her by way of some comfort, and he had made her acquainted with Mrs Gordon ; and the fact is,

that Ellen was born under their roof, and I found that they were attached to the bairn ; and the father, he was willing to make a settlement of a few hundred pounds for the aliment, provided I could manage to keep all that had happened snug. I knew—he told me so distinctly—that if the affair were blown in that quarter, it would ruin him in the opinion of his friends, and particularly of the family into which his mother had married—the Daltons of Grypherwast.”

“ Ha !—I see it, father.”

“ To be sure you do. If he were blown there, he could have no farther hopes from them ; and besides all that, he would lose his Liverpool match, which, I told you, he had already set his heart upon. In brief, Thomas, I may have done wrong, but I judged it was for the best at the time, so I e’en agreed to the plan he had proposed. I settled it that the bairn should be brought up by Keith’s sister. She was a widow lady, and had no family of her own ; and you know as well as I do, that they have been as kind to her, from that day to this, as they could have been if she had been their ain flesh and blood. In the mean time, Cat-

line marries the Liverpool lady—a great heiress supposed to be, but in that he soon found he had been mistaken. Time goes on—his children grow up—his sister, Miss Dalton, dies—and the estate is left, *not* to him, as you know, but to his daughter.”

“ Disappointed in all his base views !—How justly punished ! ”

“ Punished ? His punishment is to begin yet.”

“ How, father, how ? Has he not lost both his wife’s fortune and his sister’s ?—What now remains ? He *is* punished—he is poor ; and, after what you have told me, can I doubt that he is miserable ? ”

“ Tam Macdonald, you are a sensible lad—Was there ever a man worse used than I have been ? ”

“ Indeed, my dear father, you have quite satisfied me as to Sir Charles Catline’s character ; but you must forgive me for saying that I am yet to learn in what respect he has injured you. If you are still alluding to the affair of Mr Frederick Chisney, I must tell you plainly, that had I known as much of Sir Charles a few months ago as I do now, I should scarcely have been persua-

ded to think even for a moment of connecting myself with his family."

"His family?—His daughter?—What's the objection, boy?"

"Why, how can you ask, father?—A young woman brought up by such a man—How could one expect much from her?"

"O! I take you—'tis the education you were thinking of. Well, after all, Miss Ellen has, I dare say, been far better with honest old Keith."

"Certainly—most certainly so—no comparison, father."

"No comparison in the world, Tom—and look at the result—what a different creature!"

"Ay, indeed," said the Cornet, and he sighed, and avoided the old man's peering eyes.

"A charming young lady, indeed, Tom.—Why, for that matter, she's a perfect beauty—so was her mother before her, to be sure.—What say you, Tammy?"

"Why, what should I say, father? I—I—what can I say? Everybody acknowledges Miss Hesketh's beauty."

"Miss Hesketh!—Say Miss Catline at once, man.—Look at that paper, Tam."

“ Good God ! his handwriting ! ”

“ Ay, troth is it, Thomas ; my word, I took good care that it should not go out of my keeping—look at that too.”

“ A bond !—his handwriting again ! ”

“ Ay, ay, leave me alone for the handwriting ; why, sir, I can prove the thing—I can prove it—ay, and what’s more, he knows, the scoundrel knows, that I can prove it.”

“ To be sure, he does—but what use could it serve ? I’m sure, father, you can’t think that you would be doing the young lady any favour by throwing her into the hands of such a parent.”

“ What mean ye, lad ? ”

“ Such a parent as Sir Charles—a bad man, and surely, surely, a bad father. Why, he has neglected her all her days—what good purpose could it answer to force him to acknowledge her now ?—I suppose you have no fears as to the bond.”

“ Perhaps not.”

“ Nay, if you’re not sure of the money, ’tis another matter. In justice to her, you certainly

ought to lose no time in having that part of it placed beyond all sort of doubt."

"You may trust me, Tom;" and he thrust the papers into his pocket-book, and that into his bosom, with a most exquisite grin. "But we're neglecting our bottle, Tom; fill a bumper, and I'll give you a toast, and a toast that you'll scarcely find fault with—ay, man, that's filled like a man—and here's to Ellen Catline and her Right—her Right, I say—her Right, Tom Macdonald, and nobody's but hers."

"Miss Catline!"

"Weel, and what for are ye curtailing my toast?—once more, I say, 'tis *Ellen Catline and her Right*."

"*Ellen Catline and her Right*, be it."

"Be it?—It is—it shall be."

"What shall be, father?"

The old man kept his keen eye upon the Cornet's not very composed countenance for a good many seconds; at last he shook his head, and said, "Tom Macdonald, 'tis but a poor head thou hast got upon that comely pair of shoulders."

“ My dear father——”

“ Ye needna be dear fathering me, Tam—od, man, but ye are a slow chield—*you* a Macdonald ! Oh, fie ! oh, fie !—Oh ye gomeril,” he added, in a lower tone, and grinding his teeth as he let out the words—“ Did not I once shew you a certain testament, the copy of it, I mean ? Did not I give it into your own hand ? Did not I see you read it ? and did I not talk it ower wi’ you clause by clause, and line by line, ye —— but pshoooh ! pshoooh ! what signifies either reading or hearing wi’ some folk ?—Did your een just roam blind ower’t, as if it had been a lottery hand-bill, or a quack’s puff, you haveril ?”

“ Over *what*, father ? Upon my word, you are too hard with me.”

“ Upon my word, you are too slow for the patience of a saint, sir. Why, you silly callant, what are ye dreaming at ? Did you not read Miss Dalton’s will ?”

“ I did—and what has that to do with the matter we were speaking of ?”

“ I’m clean wearied o’ you, Tam Macdonald ; but come, come, I want to see the paper again at

any rate myself—here's the keys of my writing-table, you'll find in D—the third packet that comes to your hand—run, now, and see you bring it down cannily.”

Tom had no difficulty in discovering the packet in the well-arranged repositories of the careful scribe. He returned with it immediately, and found his father strutting up and down the room, and rubbing his hands. He took the packet from him instantly, and untied it ; and putting on his spectacles, ran his eye rapidly over the pages, until he reached the passage he had been in quest of—he muttered to himself, took his son by the hand, and, laying his forefinger on the spot, said, “ There, Tom, there it is, you silly boy—he that runs might read how it stands.”

“ The name is left out,” says Tom ; “ it certainly is a strange omission—perhaps 'tis the fault of the copier.”

“ Not a bit of it,” cries the grinning conveyancer—“ not a bit of it, my hearty—I saw the original, and compared them with my own eyes.”

“ And does it not occur in any other part of the deed ?”

“ Gae away, gae away, read it over for yourself—you’ll find the Christian name left out in every part—od, man, do you not see how it has happened ? the Christian name had been omitted in the draft, and the principal deed had been signed in a hurry, ere there was time to fill it up.”

“ A strange blunder, surely, in the lawyer.”

“ An ignorant ramshackle, no question ; however, ’tis a good deed, Tom—ye need na doubt it—Sir Charles took the opinion o’ counsel as to that matter.”

“ And Mrs Chisney is safe, after all ?”

“ Safe ! aha ! lad, there will be twa words to that bargain, I promise you—Safe ? safe enough, ye may swear—just as safe as she deserves to be.”

“ I begin to see what you are thinking of, father.”

“ Begin to see ?—we’re meikle beholden to you, no question, Tom—begin to see it, i’faith ! why, ’tis as clear as day-light, man—we have but to prove the wedding, and the birth—leave me alone for that part o’t—and as I am a Christian saul, the braid lands are her ain as sure as if she

had been nine times infest in every square inch o' them—and now, what do you think of all this affair, Tammy Macdonald?"

"Think? why, what should I think? I am sorry for Mrs Chisney, but of course—of course, I shall be rejoiced to see Miss Ellen have her right."

"I believe ye, Tom," says the old man, very quietly; "I'll believe you on your bare word, my lad, this time."

The bell rung just then, and a moment after Mr Keith's voice was heard in the lobby. "Plague on't," quoth Macdonald, "the Priest has fallen in with indifferent claret for once, I believe—I did na look for him these two hours—but, however, Tom, my dear, I fancy all's said that need have been said; you understand me completely—there's to be no hurrying—*festina lente* is to be our motto—we've the haill simmer afore us."

"I hope Sir Charles will not make any foolish opposition," says the Cornet.

"Pooh! pooh! Sir Charles, indeed! he may whistle on his thumb for me, my cock—I have him—I have him—do you mind your hits—but

I need not preach *now*, I believe ; you colour, callant—weel, weel, be as blate as ye like wi' me, sae ye be bauld elsewhere."

" Father—hear me for a moment, father," says Tom, earnestly.

" Tutti tatti," quoth Glenstroan, " I have een in my head as well as my neighbours—ye had a pleasant walk this forenoon, Tom ?"

" Yes, sir, certainly ; we went down to the sea-coast."

" Oo, ay—oo, ay—but eneugh, eneugh, I'm no wanting to hear the particulars, man—She's a sweet lassie, i' my faith, if she had not ae bawbee to rub on anither."

" Miss Catline ?"

" Wheesht, wheesht, young man—Miss Hesketh, you mean—keep a watch on your lips now, and take ye care how ye come rapping out with things afore the time—Keith's a keen chield, believe me, and no half sae deaf I sometimes think, as he would have us give him credit for. Be particularly cautious, Tom ; in a week or two, maybe I'll have farther orders—" And with this the scribe drained the single bumper that remained of the

magnum ; and pressing his finger once or twice significantly upon his lips, moved towards the door of the room. Tom heard him whistle a bar or two of " Tam Glen," as he went up stairs to the drawing-room, where Mr Keith had already joined the society of the two ladies.

CHAPTER V.

THE hurry of surprise (to say nothing of other emotions) with which Tom Macdonald received the intelligence of the preceding chapter, was such, that it was no wonder he had heard it to an end ere his mind could command itself to weigh, with anything approaching to sober deliberation, the whole bearings of the circumstances under which his newly-acquired knowledge left him. In the drawing-room, to which he was obliged to repair almost immediately, he conducted himself in a style that failed not to excite the attention both of his father and of Ellen, although it is true that they severally attributed what they could not but remark, to very different causes, and not less true, that neither of them was perfectly happy in conjecturing. Ellen not unnaturally conceived that the trying conversation of the morning had shaken Tom's nerves. Indeed, agitated as she had

been herself in consequence of it, how could she think otherwise? The old writer, on the other hand, contemplated the absent and abstracted demeanour of his son with occasional crafty glances of triumphant satisfaction. From the close intimacy which he had previously delighted in observing—but, above all, from the tender parting of which he had that very day obtained a glimpse while coming down to dinner—he had not the least doubt that his son and Ellen were lovers; and he now watched their eyes, which, to be sure, did not meet without betraying a little soft confusion, with a proud sense of self-congratulation. Yes! he *had* at last taken the right way—forcing young people upon each other was, after all, a folly; he *had* profited by his experience; this quieter and less obtrusive art *had* done its work; Tom had been flattered with the thought of acting independently, and now the silken fetters were riveted beyond all possibility of bursting. Had he proclaimed even this angel an heiress, and commanded his son to woo her, such was the perversity of a young spirit, he might have commanded in vain. How exquisite was the balm of these

dreams?—How bland the simper which they communicated to his lips! As for Tom's being more silent and awkward this evening than he had usually been in the presence of his supposed inamorata, this the old gentleman set down to nothing but the tumult of joy into which, he doubted *not*, the Cornet had been thrown by the discovery that in place of wooing a poor fair one, his union with whom would probably be opposed by his parent, he had been all the while sacrificing not on the altar of love only, but also on that of ambition, and, in fact, following with unconscious fidelity and perseverance the very path which had been chalked out for him by the prudent and sagacious affection of the author of his being.

In reality, the perplexity of the poor young gentleman's meditations was such, that it might well have baffled the most skilful analyser of countenances, to read aright the manifold workings that had stamped their blended and interwoven traces upon his. It was not until the party had broken up, and he had mused over the whole affair for more hours than one in his own cham-

ber, that he himself could be said to understand thoroughly what, in the first tumult of excitement, had merely pressed upon him certain vague, and scarcely distinguishable emotions, of the pleasurable and the painful.

And these emotions, calmed as his reflections had come to be, were still mingled together inextricably in his bosom. The disappointment of his heart had not hardened it. Ellen had refused him her love, but this was not hers to give. It had been bestowed ere she knew him, and he could not but say to himself that it had been bestowed upon one every way worthy of the inestimable boon. Some indefinable mixture of weakness and soreness there might be, but, on the whole, his disappointment had been received at first with humility, and he could now think of it with uncomplaining seriousness. The manner in which she had treated him—the open, frank, candid, womanly gentleness with which she had at once told him *her* secret—this had moved his gratitude. Had it not been so, he must have been unworthy of the name of manhood. Whatever taint of frailty might still hover near him, he was resolved to

banish it; and he struggled against it, and his better thoughts were prevailing—had prevailed.

To know that Ellen, who conceived herself to be a poor, deserted, and forlorn creature, was, in reality, at this very moment entitled to the possession of an honourable name, and of a splendid fortune, which would at once enable her to be happy with the man she loved, and from whom she had supposed herself to be all but hopelessly separated—To know all this, and not to rejoice that such was the real state of affairs, would have augured a mind not only capable of evil, but altogether incapable of good. He rejoiced—he pleased himself—in the midst of the less genial thoughts that sometimes crossed the train of his reflection he could not but please himself—with picturing the near termination of all her misfortunes. Nay, he felt that he owed Ellen much—and he felt, that to be of use in hastening and facilitating in any way this consummation, would afford to him a truer and more lasting satisfaction than anything else he could at the moment fancy himself engaged in. In a word, his spirit tossed upon itself until all the clinging dross of earthly frailty was

winnowed away. And, long ere sleep came near his pillow, he had vowed to himself, that until her happiness was accomplished, he should be hers—and hers alone—the humble unhoping servant—the friend—the brother. The tender passion that had seen its flower withered, still kept its root within his breast ; and a certain soothing charm was breathed from it, to heighten the resolution, and adorn the devotion, of a young and manly bosom.

And need there was for both. Macdonald was a son, and, strong as his other feelings were on this occasion, how could his filial ones be weak ? At first, he had been so much taken by surprise, that he had been altogether incapable of scrutinizing the motives of other breasts, perplexed and agitated as he was with the conflicting passions of his own. But now he was alone, and, in so far at least, he had recovered the possession and command of himself ; and how could he avoid the painful necessity of examining—if examining it need be called—the whole conduct of his father throughout the transactions, from which their old veil of mystery had been so suddenly and unexpectedly

removed? And what, alas ! could be the result of that examination ? His father had known the history of Ellen from its beginning ; he had also known, for several months past, all that his son had never suspected of the defects of the will under which Miss Barbara Catline had succeeded to the estates of her aunt, Miss Dalton. He had known this, and yet it was he that had suggested and urged that suit, which, if indeed there could have at any time been the least doubt of that, subsequent incidents had so clearly proved to have been devised and prompted merely from views of worldly ambition and aggrandisement. And now, what trace was there of any more generous, or rather of any more just sentiments, having succeeded to these?—Alas ! none—He was willing to establish Ellen in her right—but why ? only because he believed that by doing so he should be gaining, through another channel, the same filthy lucre which, through any channel, no matter how sinful, he had been willing to acquire.

The Cornet had never permitted himself to sit as a judge upon his father. Many parts of his behaviour had indeed conspired, in spite of himself,

to force upon him the conviction that he was not a man of the highest vein of honourable feeling. This defect, however, he had been ever willing to attribute to nothing but the character of those transactions and affairs into which his course of life had of necessity thrown him—the meannesses with which his early poverty had put him in contact, and with which his protracted struggle to get the better of that poverty might have made it almost impossible for him not to become familiar. But here—what sophistry even of filial partiality—what reluctance even of wounded Nature herself, could blind the young man to the deep and desperate wickedness of which his parent had been guilty? What thoughts could equal in bitterness those which now forced themselves into the possession of this candid bosom? Even conscious guilt itself could scarcely have been followed by more perfect humiliation. His cheek, in his midnight privacy, glowed with burning blushes. Wrath, stern and gloomy wrath—high indignation, that feared to deem itself scorn—sorrow, miserable sorrow—sorrow for his father—double, treble sorrow for his mother—such were some of

the tumultuous and tormenting emotions that chased each other over a mind that had before been abundantly lacerated; and from them it will easily be imagined what were some of the temptations against which there behoved to be no slender struggle, before the high sense of right and justice could achieve a total victory, even aided as this was by all the melancholy chivalry of a generous and disinterested attachment. The struggle, however, had been endured, and the victory had been gained.

It was the first time that this young man had found himself called upon to grapple with any thing like the real difficulties of life and action. He saw that a crisis had come—that events were gathering—and he felt that it was impossible he should be a mere spectator. And what should he do?—how should he begin?—whom should he lean to?—whom could he lean to or consult?—Might it not be possible to melt his father by one strong, since reappeal?—might it not be possible to persuade him at once to drop all his own selfish schemes, and serve Ellen, merely for her sake, and for the sake of justice?—But what if pride,

and the wrath of contradiction, and the bitterness of baffled artifice, should be sufficient to set that strong mind altogether upon the defensive—to make him turn round with a withering sneer, and destroy, in the very instant of irritation, the only proofs of that marriage, which unproved, the whole web must for ever remain unentangled? He knew the hot and the vindictive temper of the man—he knew enough of it at least to make him tremble while he pondered over these possibilities. But Sir Charles Catline might at once remove that, and every other difficulty, by avowing his marriage with Ellen's mother. He, too, had been disappointed, and his injuries had come to him from his own flesh and blood. What sort of reconciliation had taken place, or if any had taken place, the Cornet knew not; but the more he thought of all the circumstances—above all, of Frederick Chisney's character and disposition, the more did he feel the conviction, that no sincere friendship would ever be cemented between Catline poor, and Chisney rich. In the bitterness of his outraged affections, might not Sir Charles be glad to turn from Barbara and her lord to this poor desolate crea-

ture, the pledge of the first love of his youth?—might not his weaned heart be at this very moment thirsting after the luxury of reconciling himself to her that had never injured him?

The Cornet had heard nothing of Sir Charles for several weeks past. The truth is, that the Baronet, after remaining for a little while at Portobello, in expectation of hearing from Mr and Mrs Chisney, and also in anxiety to have an interview with Mr Macdonald, had been at last convinced, that none of these parties were at all desirous of holding any immediate communication with him.—Of Barbara and her husband he could not recover the smallest trace. Macdonald, he was told by his clerks in Edinburgh, was likely to remain for some time longer in the South. Lady Catline, meantime, had been left alone in London; and he found himself, however reluctantly, under the necessity of joining her there, both for the purpose of escorting her down into Lancashire, and for that of consulting certain persons with whom he had of late years had but too many dealings, as to the arrangement of his pecuniary affairs, which had been thrown into the greatest confusion in

consequence of the events that had recently taken place in his family. Sir Charles had left Scotland the very day before Macdonald and his fellow-travellers reached Berwick; and he only avoided meeting them by the accident of his having preferred going by the Carlisle road.

But to return to Thomas Macdonald—the result of all his meditations was, that the best and wisest course he could pursue, would be to keep quiet for a little while, until he should have some opportunity of gradually opening his mind to his father—as well as, in case that should fail, some means of learning where Sir Charles Catline was, that he might make a direct application to him, should it be necessary in the *dernier ressort*. The young man was willing, moreover, to indulge a slight hope that his father might, in some moment of unguardedness, reveal the whole story either to Mr Keith or to Ellen herself, and thus spare him altogether the most painful part of the duty for which he had been endeavouring to nerve himself. Or perhaps he might bestow some part of his confidence on Mrs Macdonald—and, in that case, Thomas could not doubt that his father

would adopt the right course, without having it suggested by him—or, at the least, that his own suggestions would receive the strongest and most irresistible aid from the generous and upright mind of his mother. He resolved, therefore, at whatever expense of pain to himself, to bear with every thing for a week or two, until events should be more ripe ; and, in the mean time, to watch, with unceasing diligence, for some opening either into his father's heart, or into that of Sir Charles Catline.

Thomas was very willing to defer for at least a few hours his next meeting with his father—so he rose early, left a note for his mother, to say that he was engaged abroad to breakfast, and was out of the house long before any part of the family were astir. He walked by himself towards the sea-coast—the very same way he had gone the day before in company with Ellen ; and after pacing for an hour or two upon the sands, proceeded towards Newhaven, where he ordered breakfast in a room looking out upon the sea.

The waiter brought him a newspaper along with his coffee ; and casting his eye lazily enough over

the columns, he was suddenly arrested by a paragraph which announced certain Captains as having been sworn into the command of different outward-bound ships at the India-House. He started, as the thought flashed upon him, that Reginald Dalton might be to sail in one of these vessels—nay, that he might have sailed already.

Should he defer a single post, that delay might be quite enough—he must write to him—he must arrest his voyage—at whatever hazard, he must do this—if it were not done, how should he forgive himself? But how?—in what terms?—how to produce the effect, without prematurely disclosing the secret of his father?—or, at the least, without betraying the secret which Ellen Hesketh had so generously revealed to himself?

But the thing must be done—and Tom Macdonald had no difficulty in choosing his alternative. He wrote immediately to Dalton, and his letter was in the post-office within an hour after it was written. He told him, in as few words as possible, that he found himself under the necessity of representing to him, that certain circumstances had occurred which would render his going to

India, at this moment, a most serious evil both to himself and to Miss Hesketh. “The use I make of that name,” said he, “and every other particular, shall be explained to you at the proper time—and, I earnestly hope, in the course of a very few weeks. In the meantime, rest assured that the step I have taken has been prompted by nothing but a sense of absolute necessity, and that I feel convinced, that although Miss Hesketh does not know of it now, she would not have forgiven me afterwards had I neglected it. I hope, therefore, you will remain in London, at whatever risk or inconvenience, until you hear farther from me ; and, in the meantime, believe me your sincere friend,” &c. &c. &c.

CHAPTER VI.

IT has already been mentioned under what circumstances Sir Charles Catline left the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, very shortly before the two Macdonalds returned to that city, in company with Mr Keith and his protegee. This unfortunate man, between the various disappointments which he had recently met with in his own family, and the pressure of pecuniary claims, which were every day becoming more and more intolerable, and from which, after what had happened, he could see but little chance of finding any way to relieve himself, was reduced to a state of most miserable anxiety and despondence, and begun his journey to London, rather from a vague feeling that it was necessary he should do something, than with any thing like a determined

plan, or even with any general notion as to what he should do.

In passing through Lancashire, he was informed that his daughter and her husband had been at Grypherwast-hall for a single night, in the course of the preceding week, and had proceeded southwards, as it was supposed in the neighbourhood, for London. Among other letters to Barbara, he had, while at Portobello, addressed one to Grypherwast; so that one at least, he could have no doubt, had fallen into her hands; and the certainty that she had received one of his appeals, and yet vouchsafed no sort of answer, added, of course, new bitterness to the reflections with which he had already been sufficiently harassed. Very shame prevented him from stooping to repair to Grypherwast, for the purpose of making personal inquiries as to the ulterior motions of the disdainful fugitives—and he went on towards the capital, in a mood which, long ere he had reached it, had settled down from the keen irritation of anger, into the deliberate coldness of hatred.

And revenge, a terrible revenge, *was* in his power—he knew that, and moments were not

wanting, when it seemed to him as if it would be a luxury to buy that revenge, even at that expense, or rather at that destruction of his own character, which he could not conceal from himself the acquisition must necessarily involve. Such moments there were. Sometimes, as the mail-coach was whirling him rapidly along in the dark, he would lean back in his seat, and grind his teeth in a savage, and even a haughty joy, picturing to himself the cloud of deadly retribution in which, by one word, he could wrap those that had rebelled and trampled upon himself—and disdaining the sacrifices by which this consummation must be purchased. But the stern wrath, under which such visions were invested with the semblance of luxury, was not lessened, when visions of a very different sort succeeded them. “I have still,” he said to himself, “one hope—one outlet—I *shall* see this Chisney—I *shall* tell him the truth, and the whole truth—I shall force him to see on what a precipice he stands, and how easily the least motion of mine can impel him headlong from the brink of all his fancied triumph—I *shall*

force him to see this—and I *shall* make my own terms.”

But what if Ralph Macdonald should have already forestalled him here?—Well he knew the cunning and unscrupulous nature of that old associate. He, too, had sustained a grievous disappointment; and, in spite of every explanation that had been, or could be given, Sir Charles felt that Macdonald *must* remain convinced, that his disappointment was entirely owing to that nervous reluctance (no matter how natural, no matter how excusable it might have been) with which he—Catline—had shrunk from putting his daughter, instantly upon her aunt’s death, in possession of the secret history, which placed both her father’s character and her own fortunes at Macdonald’s mercy. And Macdonald, too, had avoided him in the day of his calamity—who could tell, whether *he* might not have found access ere now to Chisney, and given up, for some weighty advantage to himself, the only legal evidence by which the marriage at St Andrews could now, at so great a distance of time, and under circum-

stances apparently of so great suspicion, be fairly and completely established? If this should be the case—if Chisney had already purchased Macdonald's secrecy, with what double scorn would he not now turn upon him—with what real scorn would not his knowledge of all that dark history entitle even *him* to receive his applications? The more he thought of all these different views of the matter, the more did his mind become balanced between hope that was scarcely less than fear, and fear that was nothing less than despair. It was under the influence of such conflicting and tormenting doubts and anticipations, that Sir Charles once more entered London.

And in London he found no comfort. His wife, a silly woman, vain to excess in prosperity, peevish to excess in adversity—accustomed in either fortune to be coldly and unkindly treated by her husband—received him with sour looks and endless questions, and teased with idle reproaches one that was overwhelmed already with the burden of just and unpartaken troubles. He could hear nothing from her of Barbara and her lord—and none of his acquaintance possessed, or at least

avowed, more knowledge of them. Meantime he was surrounded by creditors, who had advanced money to him from year to year upon the strength of his expectations from his sister, and who had spared him during the weeks or months immediately following her death, only because they were led to believe, that his daughter could not refuse eventually to discharge all his incumbrances. These *post-obit* gentry were becoming every day more clamorous—and the poor man, once in London, saw clearly, that, however unhappy his situation was there, he could not leave it, without at once bringing the whole affair to a crisis. In this total discomfort—thus tottering upon the brink of ruin—thus teased from without, and tormented from within, he lingered on from day to day, and from week to week, writing letters to Macdonald and receiving no answers—reiterating advertisements, addressed to eyes that he scarcely expected would deign to understand them—flattering Jews—scolding his wife—and cursing himself.—Guilt and need preyed in stern alliance upon him—and yet, in spite of all these stimulants, his

state of mind was, on the whole, one of languor, listlessness, and utter weariness of heart.

Frederick Chisney and his lady, meanwhile, had been keeping themselves so long out of the reach of their acquaintances, from an odd mixture of motive, or, perhaps the better phrase might be, of whim. Barbara had eloped in the way we have seen, because she was resolved to marry Frederick, and would not undergo the fatigue of fighting with her father's avowed and earnest predilection for the alliance of the Macdonald family. She had, however, such a high sense of her own importance, that her father's pursuing her flight, from stage to stage, and even from kingdom to kingdom, had appeared to her in the light of a most unwarrantable and intolerable interference with the will and pleasure of the heiress of Grypherwast. His letters, and, above all, his pertinacity in stuffing the newspapers with advertisements to "A young Gentleman and Lady"—"Two fugitives, who have only to return, in order to be welcomed by their best friends"—"F. and B." &c. &c. had been considered as so many

aggravations of the original insult by Barbara—and Frederick, who was not without some feelings that rendered him sufficiently willing to put off the meeting with his own brother and sister, (I allude to what he knew they would think of his interfering with the claims, however imaginary, of Reginald Dalton,) very easily gave into her proposal—which was neither more nor less, than that they should continue to jaunt about from place to place for a few weeks, and so allow all their friends time to cool. In pursuance of this scheme, the gay couple had, after their short visit to their Lancashire domain, once more assumed a feigned name, (a different one, too, from what they had been pleased to carry with them into Scotland,) and struck through Cheshire into Wales. They had amused themselves among the romantic scenery of that country, passing a few days occasionally at any place that happened particularly to hit their fancy. They had traversed the principality in almost the whole of its extent ; —and were at last coming back slowly to London, by the way of Bristol and Bath, just about the time when Sir Charles Catline's affairs had ap-

proached such a degree of perplexity, that, in all probability, a week more must see him in prison, or at least safe from prison, only by having taken up his abode within the rules.

They stopped a day at Oxford—the young lady was anxious to see the wonders of the place, and perhaps her lord was not sorry to have the opportunity of shewing off his pretty heiress and his handsome equipage to his old associates of the Cap and Gown. However that might be, they spent a very gay day there—and proceeded from thence to London, by the way of Windsor, without giving themselves the trouble of resuming their incognito. On reaching town, they drove to one of the most fashionable hotels in the parish of St James's—and immediately sent annunciations of their arrival, conceived with as much of the air of *nonchalance* as they could muster, both to the Squire of Thorwold, and to the residence of the Catlines. Mr and Mrs Chisney had, ere this time, returned to Lancashire—but the other note was forthwith answered by the personal appearance of Sir Charles Catline.

The haggard aspect, which his cares and vexa-

tions had given the Baronet, gave place to a smile of elaborate blandness, as he walked up to his daughter, who, with an air of real languor and affected modesty, rose to receive his embrace. Chisney, on his part, covered whatever perturbation he might feel under the veil of a calm and even stately politeness—and nothing passed during the first half hour of the interview but a succession of very pretty speeches, in which the young people apologized for every thing, but what they knew really required apology—and the elder gentleman rallied them on every matter, but that which, in reality, had formed from the beginning, and still formed, the main spring of his most paternal uneasiness.—By and by, Lady Catline also appeared.—Not happening to be at home when her daughter's note arrived, Sir Charles had forwarded an intimation of what had happened to the place where her ladyship was visiting ; and now she entered the room, where our trio were seated, with a countenance of lofty indifference, and received the submission of her children in a style of hauteur, which formed a striking contrast to the demeanour which her craftier lord had found

it convenient to assume. Sir Charles foresaw, that she and Barbara, who had never understood each other at any time, would infallibly have some bitter words now. He whispered to Mr Frederick that perhaps it might be well to leave the ladies together for a short time—and, the young gentleman assenting, they both quitted the room immediately.

Sir Charles, the moment he found himself alone with Frederick, threw an air of deep gravity into his face, and said, “ Mr Chisney, you must not be deceived by what I have been saying and doing in Barbara’s presence. However you might despise the hints I gave you in my letters, be assured that I *have* business of the utmost importance to communicate to you.”

“ Well, sir,” says Chisney, “ I am all ear—let me hear it.”

“ Mr Chisney, you suppose this business is of importance only to me—you are mistaken—it affects yourself—it affects the whole fortune of your wife.”

“ My wife’s fortune, Sir Charles !—and how, pray ?”

Sir Charles made no answer, but drew his son-in-law into another parlour—bolted the door, seated himself by a table, took a roll of papers from his pocket, and spread a copy of the Gryphewast will upon the board before him. “Here, sir,” said he, “is the deed, in virtue of which Barbara is an heiress—look over it, Mr Chisney—read it carefully.”

“I have read it several times already,” said Frederick—“’tis a very well-drawn deed.”

“And not worth one farthing, sir.”

“Sir?”

“Yes, sir—not worth one single sous.”

“Ha! ha! Sir Charles—you jest with me.”

“Not at all, Mr Chisney—let us understand each other—this will, sir, is not worth one single farthing, *unless I choose*.”

“Ha!—upon my word, that’s odd enough—unless *you* choose, Sir Charles Catline?”

“Unless *I* choose, Mr Frederick Chisney.”

“Pooh! pooh!—explain—explain.”

“Mr Chisney, let us understand each other. I believe I do understand you pretty well—it is time you should understand a little of me. Do

you observe, that Barbara's name is omitted here?"

"Ay, to be sure I do—but if that's all, Sir Charles, I can tell you I consulted three of the first lawyers in England two months ago, and they all agreed the omission was of no sort of importance—Is that the mare's nest then?"

"Sir, you will find, that I am not quite such a fool as you seem, in your exceeding politeness, to have done me the honour of supposing."

"A fool, sir!—Upon my word, you do me great injustice, Sir Charles Catline."

"No matter, Mr Chisney—but to the point, sir. Have I not been beautifully treated?—have you not deceived me, sir?—have you not stolen my daughter?—and, to crown all, have you not insulted me, grossly insulted me, in every item of your behaviour since?"

"Sir Charles Catline, once for all, you may depend upon it, that this style will not answer with me. Let me tell you, sir, that I conceive my alliance is by no means derogatory to all the blood of all the Catlines. Your daughter was independent of you when she chose to become my wife;

and now that she is so, it forms no part of my intentions to suffer either her or myself to be bored with this antediluvian sort of nonsense. Have done at once, Sir Charles. I assure you I had hoped we were to have none of this."

"Ah! sir, you will find that you have by no means had the last of it. Know, sir, in one word—know the truth—it rests with me, by one word, to make Barbara heiress of nothing but her smock."

"It rests with you, sir?—Indeed?—Well, and pray, what may be this *one* word?—This *vox et præterea nihil*?"

"Hear the *vox et præterea nihil*, then, Mr Frederick Chisney;" and with this he leaned across the table, so as to bring his lips within a few inches of Chisney's face, and said, in a very low, but very distinct whisper, being the while as pale as if he had been uttering a midnight incantation, "Lady Catline was not my first wife."

"Ha! impossible!" And Frederick started from his chair.

"Possible!—True!" proceeded the Baronet, neither moving from his place nor raising his voice—"most possible, Mr Chisney, and most true—

and this is not all, young man—Lady Catline's family are not my first family."

"Ha!"—

"Ay, ha! sir—nor is Mrs Frederick Chisney *the eldest daughter of Sir Charles Catline.*"

Frederick sunk into his chair again, and said, in a whisper as low as Sir Charles's, "Sir, are you playing with me?"

"No, sir," answered the Baronet, quite coolly, "there is no play here, Mr Chisney—I *have* another and an elder daughter than Barbara."

"And I am ruined?"

"Yes, sir, and you are ruined—if I speak one word."

There was a pause of some minutes, during which they continued eyeing each other stedfastly. Chisney broke the silence—"Are you alone, sir, in possession of this secret?"

"I would to God I were, sir."

"You are not?"

"No, sir, I am not—there is *one* more."

"And but one?"

"One—just one."

“ Who?—Where is he?—What can be done?”

“ Much, *if* I choose.”

“ Choose, sir?—Good God! Do you hesitate?
—What can buy his secrecy?”

“ *His* secrecy, sir?—And what of *mine*?”

“ Yours? O, Sir Charles, I cannot believe that you are in earnest. Could you think, could you dream of it?”

“ Dream of what, sir?—Dream of doing justice to my own child?”

“ And Barbara!”—

“ Ay, sir—And what has Barbara merited at my hands?—And what have you merited, Mr Frederick Chisney?”

“ Sir Charles—Sir Charles—name your terms—say what you please—do with us as you will.”

“ Come, Mr Chisney,” said the Baronet, throwing himself back in his chair, and folding his arms on his breast,—“ Come, sir, you now begin to speak something like sense; but be in no hurry—if we once fairly understand each other, there need be no haste about the particulars. In the mean time, you will sign an obligation, taking upon you some debts that are distressing me here, in

London ; and when that is done, why, I think, the best thing we can do is to go together in quest of the third person, whose mouth we must seal."

" Sir, I will sign anything you please—I am in your hands—you know I am."

" Ah ! sir, but we are both in the hands of another. Come, sir, there's no need for mystery—you know the man I mean—you know old Macdonald."

" Ha ! Macdonald ?"

" Ralph Macdonald—the same."

" I understand the thing now, sir—his son was——"

" Don't speak about his son now, sir—that, you know, is all over—we must see what terms we can make."

" Instantly—Oh ! yes, sir, instantly."

" Wait a little, my friend. I have not seen him since the day you left London ; nor have I been able to hear from him, although I have written a dozen times."

" And where is he ?"

" I don't know—he was not in Scotland, nor expected to be soon there, when I left Edinburgh."

“ That’s weeks ago—he is there now—I know he is.”

“ How do you know any thing of it, sir?”

“ As I came through Oxford, a few days ago, I heard of his having been there, and having set off from thence for Scotland about a month ago, or more.”

“ Are you quite sure of that?—how?”

“ Why I heard of it rather accidentally, in consequence of making some little inquiries about some persons of my acquaintance, who, I found, had set off for the North along with him and his son.”

“ Who, I pray?—who?”

“ An old Catholic Priest, one Keith—and his niece, a Miss Hesketh.”

“ And they set off for Scotland with Macdonald?”

“ Yes—Good God! what’s this?—Do you know them, sir?”

“ Sir, you are ruined—I am ruined—we are both ruined irretrievably !”

“ Sir Charles !”

“ That young lady, sir, was my daughter,” and he rose and stamped upon the ground, and

grinded his teeth in curses. "We are undone, sir!—outwitted—baffled—baffled like children—Macdonald has been too much for me! Sir, you see what is the end of all your art."

"Miss Hesketh your daughter!—Then, sir, we are indeed undone."

"I should not be surprised," says Catline, "if she were already married to that stripling—Cursed, rash, false, old scoundrel!—she is his son's wife at this moment!"

There was another pause longer than the preceding—both of them all the while pacing the room rapidly, and crossing each other every other moment, without exchanging even a glance. At last Sir Charles stamped again upon the floor, and said, "Chisney, we are fools—why do we stand here dallying with time, when already it may be too late?—Come, sir, we must not trifle now—there is but one chance remaining—if we are to lose it, let us not have ourselves to blame more than is necessary. What o'clock is it, sir? Let us leave London this instant."

"For Edinburgh?"

“ Ay, certainly, sir. Do you go and tell the ladies any story you please, and I shall order horses this moment to your carriage.”

“ Must we both go, sir ?”

“ Pshaw ! are you mad ? Do you dote, young man ? Do you take Macdonald for a numbskull ? Faith, we have a pretty title to do so !—Come, sir, you can do nothing without me, and I can do nothing without you.”

“ Well, sir, I am ready, I shall do your bidding.—But stop, there is one ray of hope still, sir—perhaps she will not have young Macdonald. I more than suspect that she has been for a long while in love with Mr Dalton.”

“ Reginald Dalton ?”

“ The same, sir—he has fought for her once. I know not how far they may have carried it.—Upon my life, I believe she will not think of the young Scotsman.”

Sir Charles repeated the word, “ Dalton,” twice or thrice over to himself, and began pacing across the room again with a heavier and slower step than before. He struck with the palm of his hand upon his forehead, and muttering to himself, rung

the bell. He ordered the horses, and motioned to Chisney to leave the apartment, and acquit himself of his commission.

Chisney made up a hasty story about business, which made it absolutely necessary for him and Sir Charles to set off immediately for Gryphewast. Barbara stared and frowned. Lady Catline fanned herself in indignation—there was a short scene of wondering, reproaching, questioning, and exclaiming. It ended, however, in Barbara's being removed to her mother's lodgings, and the two gentlemen were in Huntingdonshire by daybreak the next morning.

CHAPTER VII.

THE Baronet and his son-in-law, having performed the journey as rapidly as either of them had traversed the same road in flight or pursuit some time before, reached Edinburgh early in the morning of the third day. Wearied and heated as Sir Charles was, he would have repaired instantly to Macdonald's house, had it been a few hours later ; but, as it was, he was fain to get into bed, and endeavour to profit by the interval which he could not abridge, in collecting a little of strength and of coolness for a day, in the course of which he well knew he should have abundant occasion for more of both than he was likely to muster.

Sleep he could not—indeed he scarcely attempted to court sleep—but he rose refreshed in some measure, notwithstanding, and having performed his toilet, was in Queen Street by the

time when he supposed Macdonald would be done with his breakfast, and at liberty to see him. The servant, however, told him that his master was from home ; and being questioned more particularly, informed him that the whole family had set off about half an hour before, for Rosslynn, where they were to spend the greater part of the day. Sir Charles asked, if they were to be at home to dinner, and was answered in the affirmative. He asked if any company were along with the family. The servant endeavoured to conceal a smile that rose to his lips as he answered, that there was nobody but a Mr Keith and a Miss Hesketh, who had been living under the roof for some weeks past. Sir Charles had expected this answer, yet he could not hear it without a palpitating bosom. He turned away abruptly—the servant asked for his card—he fumbled in his pocket, and stammered out that he had none about him—that it was of no consequence—that he would call again in the evening. The door was shut—the moment after, he rung the bell again, and said that he wished to leave a note for Mr Macdonald. The man shewed him into the library, and remained

by him until he had written and sealed a brief announcement of his arrival, and an earnest request for an hour's conversation as soon as possible. Having left this upon the table, Sir Charles quitted the house, and was joined, ere he had walked many paces, by Chisney, who had been hovering at no great distance. The two gentlemen walked back to their hotel, and shut themselves up there the whole of the morning. It was one of the brightest and loveliest summer days that ever had been seen—they sat together silent for the most part—counting the minutes and the hours, inly cursing the clear heaven and the soft air which had produced the delay—watching, with impatient dread, the approach of the moment when certainty must take the place of fear.

Sir Charles waited until sunset, and still there came no message from Queen Street. He then could endure it no longer—he bade Chisney, on no account, stir from where he was. “They must be come back,” said he, “and Macdonald wishes to put off our meeting till to-morrow. I am determined that to-night I will see him ; if he be not arrived now, I will walk within sight of his house

until he come. I will force myself into his presence, and send for you to join us the moment it is possible for me to do so."

Meanwhile, Macdonald had been for several hours returned from his excursion. During the hours they had spent among that delightful scenery, he had seen, with a satisfaction which he could with difficulty prevent himself from expressing in open words, symptoms of a mutual intelligence in the looks and demeanour of his son and Ellen, which, to say truth, a very skilful observer might have been pardoned for interpreting somewhat wide of the mark. He had no more doubt of their tenderness than of his own existence. He was the happiest of men, and the proudest ; and nothing but the presence of his wife, whose innate purity of perception he felt the necessity of taking leisurely methods of beguiling, could have prevented him from making Keith acquainted with the whole of the matters that had so long occupied his meditations, in the course of their walk. That obstacle could not be so easily surmounted, and he returned to Edinburgh with his heart as loaded as it was when he left it in the morning, but, notwith-

standing, in a flow of spirits—quite overjoyed with himself and his management—and indulging in the most delicious dreams about the approaching triumph of all his schemes. It was in this state of things that he received Sir Charles's note—a most unwelcome interruption it was, and yet he could not but congratulate himself on having escaped meeting the Baronet entirely unprepared. He was very absent during dinner, and, on pretence of business, contrived to be left alone immediately afterwards. Indeed, Mr Keith had gone up stairs to refresh himself with a short nap, so that he had only Tom and the two ladies to get rid of.

He was casting the affair about in his mind, and preparing himself with such arguments, or rather such words, as he thought might be most likely to soften the harshness of an interview, which, in one point of view, he dreaded almost as much as the Baronet himself. He was pacing up and down the room, every now and then stopping to imbibe new courage as he passed the table on which the decanters still remained. He had gradually worked himself up to a very reasonable mood of firmness, when the bell rung, and Sir Charles was ushered abruptly into his presence.

The twilight was on the wane—the room was dark—yet each could see the flashing of the other's eye. Macdonald's cheek was burning red—but no wine had aided the flow of Sir Charles Catline's blood. His brow was haggard—his cheek deadly pale. He stopped the moment he had passed the threshold, and Macdonald stopped in his walk too. They eyed each other in silence for a moment. “Sir Charles Catline, let us be seated,” said Macdonald—“we shall have much to say to each other.”

“We have, Mr Macdonald. We shall be safe from intrusion?”

“Certainly we shall.—But why do you ask?”

“No matter—'tis dark, sir—order lights, if you please.”

“Lights, say you?—Well, be it so, sir—you shall have your own way.” And with this he rung, and desired the servant to bring candles, and a glass for Sir Charles.

“Mr Macdonald, we are not here to drink wine. Upon my word, I think we have other business.”

“True, Sir Charles—but they may do very

well together for a' that. Here's to your good health, sir. I drink it honestly, whatever you may please to think.—Ha ! well then, if that way won't do, let me hear at once what you have got to say, sir ?”

“ Macdonald !—but why should I waste words—I know all that you have been doing, sir—I know what you have had the cruel boldness to plan—I know what you mean to complete and consummate—I confess, that you have outgone all that I had even dared to fear.”

“ Sir Charles Catline, let us understand each other. You, sir, are well entitled, are you not, to hold this language to me ?—You, sir—yes, you, you, the most deliberate, cold, unfeeling, unnatural——”

“ A truce—a truce to your moralities, sir—*your* moralities !—Why, sir, we *do* understand each other—I at least understand you. Have you considered what is to be the consequence of this exposure to yourself ?—I know that is the only thing you will listen to.—Give me your answer.”

“ I will—I will. My good friend——”

“ Friend ! Macdonald ? ”

“ Ay, friend, Catline !—But be that as you will. Well, sir, I have considered every thing. I have been miserably abused by you—I will not say by your deliberate treachery, but at least by your silly contemptible shuffling. I have been so, sir ;—and you have been abused—that is the very best view I can take of the matter—by your daughter. She has outwitted you first and last—she has married a scoundrel—you are a beggar, and you have nothing but yourself, and this child of yours, to thank for it. And yet I—I am to lie by, and see your daughter, your rightful eldest daughter, cheated, robbed, sir—and for whom ?—not for *you*.”

“ You don’t know what you are saying, sir—you are doing injustice to Chisney. He acted ill, it is true ; but he now is disposed—nay, anxious and eager to make amends to me—and to you, sir. He is here—he is in Edinburgh—he came hither with me from London, on purpose to let you hear from his own lips what he is willing to do for both of us.”

“ What *he* is willing?—De’il mean him, say I—ha ! ha ! ”

“ You may laugh, sir, if you will—but do you hold your character as nothing?—Are you so blind, that you can’t see what is to be the issue of all this, even if you do follow your own way, and with more complete success than you may perhaps have in the end if you do so——”

“ What, sir !—Do you take me for a ninny ? Do you not know what I can do ? Do you dream that I have been leaning on chances?—Sir, I have evidence in this house that will cover you with utter confusion in one moment, if you do but dare to make it necessary for me to appeal to it. Sir, I have your letter to your wife—ay, and your bond to myself, sir. Sir, you are entirely at my mercy. Take my word for it, your best way, your only way, is to confess the truth at once, and if you do so, you may perhaps find that all daughters are not unnatural, and that all sons-in-law are not Chisneys.”

“ Mr Macdonald, your own character will go—you may be as rich as you will, but you will be a ruined man.”

“ Me a ruined man ?—and for why, good sir ? Because I trusted too much and too long to one that I knew had had his errors, but that I hoped was sound at heart in the main—because I watched over his disowned daughter, and procured her the education of a lady—because, when I found that she had rights, and that no consideration of nature or justice was to make her father give her her rights, I did at last confess to myself, that I had been sadly mistaken and egregiously duped all along as to *him*, and did step forwards to put *her* in possession of what nothing but villainy had been holding back from her ?”

“ Sir, you *may* speak in this way—but indeed it will not do with me—and what is more, far more to the purpose, it will be very far from doing with the world. Sir, there is not a man who knows anything of you but will penetrate your mask—and—but I trifle as well as yourself, sir—I know that you mean to marry her to your son—I know that but for that you would as soon have thought of cutting off your hand. I understand you too well, Mr Macdonald—have done,

have done, and hear, once for all, the only thing that will move you."

"I listen," quoth Glenstroan, filling his glass, and slowly lifting it to his lips.

"Sir, there is something in my power, after all."

"Is there indeed?—Let's hear what it is, Sir Charles."

"You smile, Mr Macdonald. Upon my word, sir, you treat me rather more cavalierly than is quite decent. Have a care, sir—have a care, I say—you know not what you are trifling with."

"Trifling, Sir Charles?—Who is trifling but yourself?—Out with your word of might and main, man—out with it at once, and let's have done."

"Mr Macdonald, you *can* put this girl in the place of Barbara—I believe you can."

"I know I can—*know* is the word, Sir Charles."

"Well, sir, let *know* be the word. I know that when you have put her in Barbara's place, I can make that place not worth the holding. Do you take me now?"

"Not at all—not at all," cries he, carelessly

crossing his legs—"I'm quite in the dark—you speak in parables."

"And what would you speak in, sir, if the will itself were not worth one straw?—heh, sir, what would you say then?"

"I would say it was a confounded pity. But you forget that I've seen the will myself—that I have a copy of it here in this house—that both you and I have ta'en the opinion of the best conveyancers in England, and that they are all agreed."

"I have forgot none of these things, Mr Macdonald."

"Then you've forgotten your wits, man, and come a wool-gathering here; but you'll find it won't do, Sir Charles Catline—indeed, indeed, I am ower auld a cat for sic strays as this. What is it you have gotten to say? or have you gotten anything to say that's to the purpose?"

"Sir, I have to inform you, that my sister might have made as many wills as she pleased; but that she had no title to alter the succession of the Grypherwast estate. Sir, I have to inform you, that, on looking over the family papers after

her death, I lighted upon something, which in due time your own eyes shall judge of. In a word, sir, there is an old entail of her great-grandfather's. I have but to produce it, and that Vicar of Lannwell is Squire of Grypherwast to-morrow."

"An entail? and where? how? where was it recorded?—Where is the evidence of its authenticity?—How was it concealed?"

"Sir, you ask a great many very pertinent questions, and I can answer them all. The deed was never recorded, because that is not the fashion nor the law in that part of the country. The evidence of the hand-writings and stamps is perfect; and as for the concealment, why the man that executed it died suddenly; and neither his son, nor his grandson, nor his grandson's daughter, ever had any turn for examining old cabinets, and I made the discovery of it—I myself, as I told you."

"And concealed it until now?"

The Baronet nodded to Macdonald.

"I would fain see the deed, if you please. Is it far off?"

“No, sir—but you shall not see it until we understand each other thoroughly. If you are satisfied with its appearance, tell me what you will do.”

“That *is* a question,” quoth the scribe. “You are satisfied—you say so, however. What do you mean to do?”

“Why, sir, I mean—I mean——”

“To burn it?—Out with the word, man—it’s on the tip.”

“If——”

“If what? Come, come, Sir Charles. Granting all this to be as badly as you say it is, what does the whole affair amount to? Why, there are just two questions, sir. First, is this estate to belong to that parson—that Vicar—or to a daughter of yours? That’s the first question. Is it a kittle ane to answer? No, no—weel, weel, let it pass. Then comes the other—Which of these young ladies is to be the heiress? Now, just cool your e’en, and look steadily at the thing for a single moment—we’ll say nothing, if you please, just for this present, about other matters. What does it

signify to you which of them—I mean to your purse?”

“ It signifies everything. Mr Chisney has promised to relieve me from all my embarassments.”

“ Weel, weel—that’s intelligible. And what if I promised you a’ that, and something more to the bargain?”

“ How?”

“ What if my son were to marry this bonnie lassie, and go halves with you, sir, on the haill lands—do you hear me *now*, sir?”

“ Ha!—Macdonald, are you serious? Let me consider—

“ Take your ain time—there’s be nae hurrying from me, sir. God pity ye, what for did ye come down with that Chisney?”

“ Stay, sir—if I had thought of all this—But what could I do or think, sir? Why, Macdonald, do me justice for once—Didn’t I know that you had carried her off?—Might I not reasonably conclude that you would lose no time?”

“ Wheesht, wheesht, man—let us have no more of this hargle-bargling about matters of no moment. What’s done’s done, and cannot be

mended—let us think only of what is yet in our power. Thank Heaven, all *is* in our power—all—all—everything, if we only do but understand each other, and go hand in hand like men. Send off Chisney—let's be quit o' *him* at once—make any cock-and-a-bull story you will—but pack him off—pack him off directly, and then we'll buckle to the wark, and no fears, no fears we'll get through the haill o't fu' gaily yet.—No fears—not at' all—but do fill your glass—do fill your glass, my dear Sir Charles.”

They sat with their eyes averted from each other, now and then meeting for an instant—and but for an instant—mutually awed, equally cowards, in vain endeavouring to assume but the shadow of confidence. Macdonald had been all the while drinking. Sir Charles now at last began to follow his example. Several bumpers had been quaffed in silence, ere either of them had courage to resume the broken thread of their discourse.

Macdonald started from his reverie, and said, “ My good friend, I fear the women will be wondering—you will stay supper, and we shall have an hour or two to ourselves after they are all in their beds.”

“ Spare me, Macdonald. I can’t think of seeing her—not just yet. No, no—do excuse me.”

“ Toots, toots, man—What the waur will ye be, or what the wiser will she be?”

“ Your secret is confined to your own breast?”

“ It is—that is, you may depend upon it, neither my wife nor Miss Hesketh has the smallest inkling of anything about it. You may depend on it, indeed.”

“ Your son?”

“ Never heed him—never heed our Tam, he’s a douce chield, whatever he looks like ; and, besides, ye ken we maun hae him afterhen.”

“ He knows all !—O, Macdonald !”

“ Wheesht, wheesht !—Ye may trust Tam—and let’s hear nae mair clavers—we’ll just have our bit supper, and then we’ll settle everything—come awa, my dear Sir Charles.”

CHAPTER VIII.

It so happened, that at the moment when these two gentlemen entered the drawing-room, Mrs Macdonald was not there. Ellen was sitting alone, stooping over an embroidering frame, and singing, in an under tone, some fragment of a melancholy old German air. The door had been opened so softly, that she neither looked up nor desisted from her song. Macdonald involuntarily halted, and Catline did so too. A crowd of bewildering thoughts came rushing over him as he gazed upon the pensive beauty. Years vanished—his Lucy, the first love of his youth, seemed to have risen in all the long-faded freshness of her prime. Even so she had looked ere sorrow had sunk deep enough to be other than an ornament, and a new grace to her loveliness—even such were the notes of her voice—even such the dark masses of luxuriant hair that hung over her brow—even

such the ringlets in which his fingers had played. A mist seemed to pass before his eyes—his heart beat with a thousand long silent pulses—repentance—ay, remorse, the darkest of all human torments, heaved his bosom, and yet there was room in it for some quiverings of a softer and more tender passion—some stirrings of sweet pain—some ineffable yearnings. He had almost lost command of himself, had not his companion, whose keen glance had read the trouble of his countenance, slapped his hand forcibly upon his shoulder. Ellen started, and Mr Macdonald, meeting her eye with inimitable composure, introduced “his friend Sir Charles Catline,” to “Miss Hesketh.” The thing passed just as if it had been nothing. The young lady received him with easy and innocent politeness. She spoke to him, but he answered only in monosyllables. Macdonald broke in with his brazen notes, and laughed, and joked, and told stories, one after the other, as if afraid of a pause.

• Mrs Macdonald entered, and having been informed already what visitor her husband was engaged with, testified no surprise in seeing him. She asked a number of common-place questions,

and received common-place answers. He, in his turn, inquired after the Cornet, and was told that he had gone out some time before, and would probably return immediately. Mrs Macdonald's way of saying this excited no sort of attention in Sir Charles, yet any one that was intimate with the lady, might have detected a little uneasiness ; for the truth was, that, more especially of late, the Cornet was quite unaccustomed to go from home in the evenings, and never did so without telling where he was to be, and with whom ; whereas now, he had received a note in the presence of the ladies, and quitted the house immediately, without giving explanation or apology of any sort.

However, supper was soon announced, (indeed, it was by this time long after the usual supper hour of the family) and the two ladies and the two gentlemen went down together to the parlour where it was served ; for, as for Mr Keith, he had found himself so much fatigued with Rosslynn, that he had declined quitting his chamber again that evening. During supper, Macdonald had, as before, almost all the burden of the conversation to himself. Sir Charles continued absent and

silent. He eat nothing, but drank a great deal of wine and water, could scarcely command himself so far as to remove his eyes for more than a second at a time from Ellen, and altogether looked and conducted himself in a style so totally different from what Mrs Macdonald had observed in him when she was at Little Pyesworth the preceding year, that the good lady doubted not he was either ill in health, or very much troubled with business. But the servants had scarcely left the room ere her husband gave her a well-known signal, and she obeyed, by retiring immediately—Ellen, of course, following her. Sir Charles started up as they were leaving the room, and continued with his eyes fixed upon the door for some moments after it was closed behind them. Macdonald allowed him to do so until he had filled both their glasses to the brim, and then slapping once more upon his shoulder, said,—“ Come, come, Sir Charles, ye’re a’ in the clouds, I believe—we maun hae ae fair bumper, at ony rate, to my bonnie lassie—Here’s to Miss Ellen.”

“ O, Macdonald,” says Sir Charles, “ what a day—what an evening—what an hour ! O, sir,

I am weary of myself and of the world. To see her!—and to see her as a stranger!—O, Macdonald, my heart is——” And he sat down in his chair, and bowed his head upon the board, and sobbed.

Macdonald was endeavouring to sooth him, whispering in his ear, when the Cornet burst abruptly into the room. He would have withdrawn on the instant, but his father beckoned him on. “Sir Charles, my dear Sir Charles,” said he, “here is your friend Thomas—Will you not speak to him?”

Catline started, and gazed with a burning blush upon the young man, whose countenance also was covered with a glow of confusion.—“Young man,” said he, “advance. Here is no time for long stories—you see me—you see all, young man. It is you that must speak to Ellen—to my daughter. Alas, my poor girl! will she ever look upon her father?”

“Nay, nay,” says old Macdonald, “we must not take things thus. All’s well that ends well. We shall all see very happy days together yet—it will all be as it should be. Shake hands now,

shake hands, and be composed, and let us a' understand ilk other."

"Young gentleman," said Catline, taking the Cornet's hesitating hand, "I fear you will scarcely do me justice—indeed I can scarcely expect it."

"You recognize your daughter?" says Thomas solemnly.

"I do," says Sir Charles—"I do."

"And her rights as such?"

"Surely, surely. Oh, sir, spare me many words. I am in your hands, spare me."

"I will join you again on the instant," said the young man, and darted out of the room.

He remained absent for perhaps a quarter of an hour—it seemed to them as if an age had passed ere he returned.

He led Ellen by the hand. Sir Charles rushed forward—the pale girl fell upon his breast.

The Cornet stood still for a moment, and then, clasping his hands together, ran up to his father. "O, sir," he whispered fervently, "you enjoy this—I see that you enjoy it!"

"My dear callant!—my dearest Thomas," was the answer, whispered as fervently as the address

He added after a moment, "Every thing is right now, my dear lad. Leave them to themselves—let them take their time—no wonder if their hearts be full."

"Mine is full too, sir," said Thomas. "Oh, sir, will you forgive me for having in some sort deceived you?"

"You deceive me, Tom?—'Tis impossible!"

"I *have* deceived you."

"When? how?"

"Ellen—O, sir, she could not love me. She loves Dalton—she was betrothed to him ere we met."

"Ha! mad boy, then all is undone," and the old man shrunk back from his son, and a deadly paleness crept over his countenance. Thomas seized his hand, and pressed it to his lips.

"Be yourself, sir—be generous—be just—be a man—Dalton is here."

"Here!"

"He is here—he knows all—I have told him everything."

The old man groaned—but withdrew not his hand from his son's grasp. The father and the

son stood gazing upon each other's faces. "Let me go for him," says Thomas—"let me bring him in. Do the whole at once. Give him his bride and his birthright."

The old man's hand relaxed its hold. Thomas ran out of the room, and the next moment Reginald Dalton was within it. The Cornet drew him towards Ellen, and while her face was yet buried in her father's bosom, placed his hand in hers.

Sir Charles raised his head, and uttered a single sharp cry, and would have sunk on the ground, had not Dalton propped him up.

"Enough," said Sir Charles, with a voice of struggling agony—"Enough, enough—'tis all over—What is the world to me?—I have deserved nothing, and I have nothing. Mr Dalton, I see how it is.—Ellen, my child, look up," and he yielded her, and Dalton kneeling received her from his hands.

"May God bless you!" said Catline, crossing her face with his hand—"May you be happy in the world, as you deserve to be. I shall not see it, but I shall know it—that—even that is more than enough.—Mr Macdonald, will you have

the goodness to give all these papers to Mr Dalton."

Macdonald drew very slowly a large parcel from his pocket, untied the strings with which it was fastened, and unfolding the copy of Miss Dalton's will, placed it in Reginald's hand, saying, "Read it at once, sir—Read it, and be satisfied."

Reginald took the paper, and making Ellen sit down by her father, advanced to the table, where the lights were, and began to read. He went over the whole while every body kept silence. Every now and then, as he was reading, he threw a glance upon the Cornet, as if to intimate that there had been some discussion between them, and that what he was now reading confirmed him in his own opinion. At last, when he had come to the end, he deliberately folded up the packet again, and delivered it to Sir Charles.

"Why, sir?—why do you give this to me?"

"To whom else should I give it, sir? Mrs Chisney is not here."

"Mrs Chisney!—Why do you trifle so?" interrupted old Macdonald—"Don't you see the

omission of the name?—Did not Tom tell you how it stood?”

“ I did,” says the Cornet.

“ ’Tis true,” says Reginald—“ I heard my friend’s account of this matter ; but he will bear me witness, that, from the first, I said it could not be as he thought it was. I can easily understand how *he* should have overlooked what I cannot.”

There was a pause of a moment.

“ Come, gentlemen,” Reginald resumed, “ I have no wish to make speeches—you *must* understand all this at least as well as I do. Miss Dalton leaves her estate to Sir Charles Catline’s daughter—she omits to mention the name indeed ; but that was and must have been a mere clerical blunder. She says expressly, that the motive of her bequest is ‘ the particular love and favour for her dear niece.’ What more need be?—She meant Mrs Chisney ; and I am sure I told you so, Tom, from the beginning—I am sure, that my Ellen would rather die than interfere with such a right upon such a quirk.”

“ A quirk ?” says Mr Macdonald, senior.

“ Yes, a mere quirk,” resumes Dalton—“ a

most visible quirk. Sir Charles Catline, speak to your daughter—ask herself—We have all our old hopes entire, and they are neither less nor less dear than they used to be.”

Sir Charles sprung from his seat, cast a glowing eye upon Mr Macdonald, and taking a roll of parchment from his bosom, said, “ Young man, generous young man, you have been tried abundantly—Read this, and be happy.”

Reginald hesitated. Macdonald whispered, “ Ay, ay, ’tis all one thing—take it, man—take it, and be thankful.”

Reginald shook his head—but obeyed and unfolded the scroll. It fell from his hand, ere he had read many lines. He took it up again, and perused it to an end, and then clasping his hands together, said, “ Now indeed am I happy. My father—my dear father has his right at last.—Who discovered this deed ?”

Sir Charles bowed. “ I—I myself—very recently—and once more may God bless you !”

Reginald laid the scroll on Ellen’s lap, and Sir Charles laid her unresisting hand within her lover’s.

CONCLUSION.

THE reader will excuse us for waiving the old ceremony of a full and circumstantial "last chapter." The sudden courage of Sir Charles Catline forsook him almost immediately. He, whose life had been artifice, could not brook the sense of his exposure—he could not bear the notion of living among those with whom his repentance, however late, would in fact be more than enough to atone for all that he had done. He wanted confidence in mankind.

Neither he nor Mr Frederick Chisney were to be found in Edinburgh on the morning which succeeded that eventful night, and yet they had not fled together. After a scene of mutual and fierce recrimination, they had parted; and for aught we know, they had parted for ever. Mr Chisney having obtained a commission, sailed to

join the army in Spain in the course of a week or two afterwards, leaving his wife to partake the fortunes of her own family, and this without even putting himself to the trouble of a farewell.

The unfortunate Baronet retired without delay to the South of Ireland, where his wife and her daughters soon afterwards joined him. The Vicar of Lannwell, as soon as he had taken possession of the Grypherwast property, discharged the whole of Sir Charles's debts, and settled a very handsome annuity upon Lady Catline. They have ever since lived in very great retirement—but it is generally understood, that Sir Charles has never recovered the entire possession of himself; and that his wife and daughters, whatever lack of cordiality there might have previously been observed among them, are unwearied in their attentions upon him in this afflicted state.

The Vicar of Lannwell married Reginald and Ellen in his own parish-church, about six weeks after the discovery took place. The young people, immediately after the ceremony, set off by themselves for Grypherwast-hall, where, in about a week, they were joined by the Vicar and (not

the least happy of the party) Mrs Elizabeth. Mr Keith also took up his abode under that roof shortly afterwards—and they all still continue to form one family.

Mr Ward has been twice in Lancashire since that time—having, it would appear, come to be of opinion, that it is part of his duty to preside, not only over the funerals of Grypherwast-hall, but also over certain household solemnities of a less gloomy description. There is, indeed, some talk of his becoming Sir Charles Catline's tenant at Little Pyesworth, with the view of concluding his days in the midst of all his old allies.

THE END.

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